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A HISTORY OF INDIA

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In this revised edition we have revised some of the chapters, for instance, the last chapter on 'The Progression of Events', and also incorporated some wholly new chapters. The process took longer than we anticipated but the revisions, we hope, will justify the delay.

An interesting suggestion received from readers led us to include a separate chapter on the North-eastern region of India—a feature that ought to be, but is seldom, found in textbooks on Indian history. South India, too, has been given greater attention and the chapter entitled 'Empire and Society' brings together many of the recent ideas and trends in historical research on colonial India, especially on the socio-economic aspects. The chapter on 'India's Freedon Movement' has been partially rewritten in the light of the considerable work done in recent years on nationalism and the national movement.

We hope we have been able to do justice to the memory of Professor N.K. Sinha, who is sadly no longer with us.

We would welcome other suggestions for our next edition.

Nisith R. Ray
Pradip Sinha

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

We begin this history with Mohenjo Daro and conclude it with the emergence of Bangladesh. It is written for college students as also for general readers. We are very much conscious that the woodenness which characterises Indian historical writing should disappear. In this book we have tried to indicate a truth of facts with cautious generalisations. The many and diverse ingredients of this long history have been sought to be examined. Social, economic, cultural, administrative as also political history receive their due share of attention. It is an uptodate review which takes full cognisance of research studies.

This is not a composite history in a rigid sense. We have divided the work into three parts and full responsibility is taken by one of us for Parts I and II and by the other for Part III. There was some planning of a general nature before the work was taken in hand.

N. K. Sinha
N. R. Ray

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PART I

ANCIENT INDIA

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Land

The two distinctive features of India's land are its vastness and variety. From the great snowy range, known as the Himalayas, in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south, it covers today a total area of 3,052,400 square kilometres, an area thirteen times as large as Great Britain. A compact geographical area, it is vast enough to be called a sub-continent. Its land mass measures about 3,200 kilometres from north to south and about the same, at its widest, from east to west.

The vast country looks an "inverted spire" hanging from the great scimitar-like Himalayas—a length of 2,400 kilometres along the northern frontier. This stretch of stupendous ranges, the loftiest in the world, sends out its offshoots southward, providing natural frontiers on the north-west and the north-east.

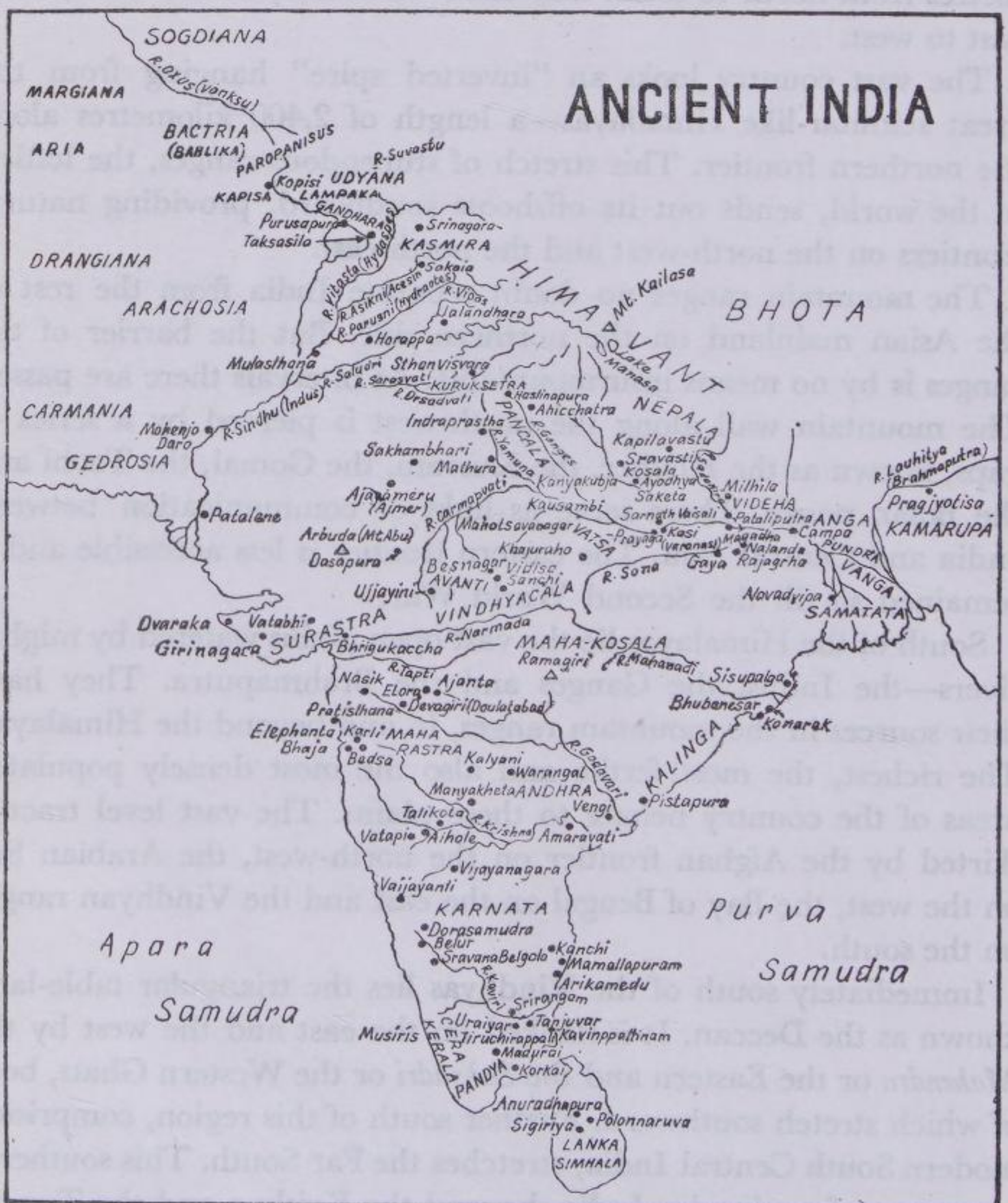
The mountain ranges no doubt separate India from the rest of the Asian mainland on the northern side. But the barrier of the ranges is by no means insurmountable. At intervals there are passes. The mountain wall along the north-west is pierced by a series of gaps, known as the Khyber, the Kurram, the Gomal, the Tochi and the Bolan passes. These serve as links of communication between India and Central Asia. The eastern frontier is less accessible and it remained so till the Second World War.

South of the Himalayas lie the vast open plains watered by mighty rivers—the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. They have their sources in the mountain ranges, in and beyond the Himalayas. The richest, the most fertile and also the most densely populated areas of the country belong to these plains. The vast level tract is skirted by the Afghan frontier on the north-west, the Arabian Sea on the west, the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Vindhyan ranges on the south.

Immediately south of the Vindhyas lies the triangular table-land known as the Deccan. It is flanked on the east and the west by the *Mahendra* or the Eastern and the *Sahyadri* or the Western Ghats, both of which stretch southward. Further south of this region, comprising modern South Central India, stretches the Far South. This southernmost part of peninsular India, beyond the Krishna and the Tunga-

bhadra, consists of narrow maritime plains starting from the Ghats and reaching as far south as the sea.

Apart from the vastness of the country with its four-fold natural divisions, its variety, partly inherent in geography, invites attention. The mountains on the north, north-west and north-east have lent the areas contiguous to them a distinctiveness such as cannot be found in the vast level plains of Hindusthan watered by the mighty streams. Or again, the peninsular part of India not only presents a picture strikingly different from that of the region north of the Vindhyas, but shows differences in several respects between the northern and the southern portions of the main table-land.



The differences in altitude, climate, temperature, flora and fauna are apparent even to a casual observer. Few countries, if any, possess such abundant variety as India. To dwell upon it is no easy task. The country offers almost every conceivable type of climate, temperature and physical configuration. The temperature ranges from the scorching heat of the deserts of Rajasthan to the bitter Himalayan cold with occasional frost and snow. Rainfall varies from 1200 to 7.5 centimetres per year with the result that some of the wettest and the driest areas in the world form integral parts of the country. India contains both arid deserts and fertile riverine lands, bare, hilly tracts and luxuriant open plains. Flora and fauna are represented here in almost all known varieties. These variations, inherent in her geography, have made their influence inevitably felt on the habits and social life of the people, making India 'the epitome of the world'.

Geographical Background

It is essential for a student of history to know the geographical background of a country he wants to study. History, it has been well said, is a part of geography. The history of India illustrates the truth of this observation with remarkable clarity. An understanding of the main currents of Indian history is extremely difficult except in the context of its geographical background. The mountains, the rivers and the seas—each of them has played its part in moulding its history.

The importance of the Himalayan ranges is apparent, though it has often been exaggerated. For instance, it is not correct to say that they have isolated India from the rest of Asia. The north-eastern frontier was until recently comparatively inaccessible but the frontier on the north-west is pierced by gaps or passes which made ingress and egress of people or even movement of troops quite possible. Nevertheless, the role of the Himalayas has been considerable, even decisive. From these lofty ranges the great river systems of the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, take their rise and derive their vigour. These mighty rivers have moulded not only the nature of the lands through which they flow but also the character of their people. The Himalayas again act as a buffer protecting, though not isolating, India from Central Asia. This has lent an element of individuality to India's concept of civilisation and social standards without necessarily preventing the influx of Asian contacts, whose impact on the culture and composition of India has not unfortunately received the attention it deserves. The impact of Central Asia, for instance, on

India and her history is bound to be a fascinating and profitable study. The fertility of Northern India is again, in a large measure, the gift of the Himalayas. They retard the northward and westward drift of the clouds, make them discharge moisture on the high peaks and thus determine the course of rainfall and help the rivers to sustain their continuous flow.

The lesser mountains, the Vindhyas and the Ghats, for example, also have important roles to play. The Vindhyas, for many centuries, stood in the way of the North and the South coming into intimate contact with each other. In doing so they promoted the character of South Indian culture as a distinct entity, marked by peculiarities of its own. But the Vindhyas did not remain unconquered for long. The story of *Agastya* is but a legendary account of the spread of Aryan civilisation to a land dominated for long by Dravidian culture. The two *Ghats* were even less effective as barriers, a baffling problem for the students of ancient and early mediaeval Indian history.

The seas with which India is bounded on three sides have also inevitably moulded the contour and character of India's history. Until the time of European maritime adventures in the late fifteenth century the seas guaranteed India's immunity against foreign invasions. They also served as highways of commerce. India's commercial relations with the countries of the Middle East on the one hand and those of the Far East on the other can be traced to days of very remote antiquity. India has a very extensive coast-line—4,800 kilometres in length. But the coast-line being mostly straight and not broken, the number of natural harbours is comparatively small. This, together with the easy availability of vast fertile lands within the country, did not make of the Indians a maritime people, like the Greeks or the Phoenicians. But at intervals the Indians are known to have made use of the seas for commercial, cultural and even political expansion in the islands, beyond the seas, specially in the regions of South-Eastern Asia. The Indians not only carried their merchandise to these areas, but founded kingdoms and, what is more important, spread there the message of their religion, language, ways of thinking, in a word, their culture. The name Greater India, reminiscent of Hellas, is a pointer to the diffusion of Indian culture and civilisation in extensive areas of South-Eastern Asia.

The rivers, too, are powerful determinants in the life of a country. The Indus, with its five tributaries, played the same part as was

played by the Nile in Egypt or the Tigris and the Euphrates in the Mesopotamian Valley. The birth and growth of India's earliest known civilisation along the valley of the Indus was by no means an accident. The stages of the Aryan migration and settlement in India were vitally linked up with the course of this river and its tributaries. The emergence of the Gangetic Valley as the first seat of imperial power was similarly not a casual phenomenon. The vast stretch of rich and fertile plains not only provided a natural field for profitable exploration in the exercise of political and economic power but also opened out immense prospects for expansion. The Brahmaputra too accounts for a pattern which may conveniently be described as the Brahmaputra Valley culture.

The influence of the rivers is no less perceptible in the making of South Indian history. If the Vindhyas account for the distinctive character of South Indian culture, the Godavari, the Krishna, the Tungabhadra and the Kaveri have largely moulded the course and character of her political and economic history.

The first two rivers have cut the South into three distinct natural divisions and the main theme in the political history of the large area served by these rivers centres round rivalry among the powers which rose into prominence in this region. The struggle entered its most crucial phase over the possession of the rich and strategic Raichur Doab situated between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers. It persisted through later ages till the days of the Bahamani and the Vijaynagar Kingdoms.

A word of caution needs to be uttered while assessing the role of the rivers in the making of India. The rivers have very often changed their courses in the course of centuries. The stages of such changes cannot unfortunately be identified with reference to a definite chronology or area. But it is possible to discern a change in the fortunes of the area undergoing such changes. In consequence, many flourishing cities lost their importance, yielding the pride of place to areas which originally deserved little or no attention, others suffered utter blackout and sank irretrievably into oblivion. As such, it is not possible to conjure up quite satisfactorily the physical picture of India as she was thousands of years ago, with the result that geography and history tend to drift from each other and "the freaks of Indian rivers" pose a baffling problem to the students of ancient and early mediaeval Indian history.

The Concept of Ancient Geography and India

The ancient geography of India contains place names and physical terms which do not correspond to their modern counterparts. It is, therefore, necessary that we should possess, in outline, an idea of the ancient geographical terms. According to ancient cosmography the universe, known as *Brahmanda* and shaped like an egg, was composed of the heavens above, the earth below and the middle air (*antariksha*) in between the two. Religious literature of later times described the earth as a flat disc of enormous dimensions, with Mount Meru forming its centre. Around Meru lay several island continents separated from each other by vast stretches of ocean. *Bharat* or *Bharatvarsha* or the land of the sons of Bharata belonged to one of these island-continents, known as *Jambu-dvipa*, considered as the innermost of seven concentric dvipas into which the earth was supposed to have been divided. In course of subsequent centuries the geographical concept of the universe, the dvipas and Bharatvarsha became less fanciful and more precise. In Buddhist literary works Jambu-dvipa is identified with that part of Asia, south of China, over which the Imperial Mauryas ruled. The better known name, India, was first used by the Greeks who derived it from the *Sindhu*, mispronounced by the Greeks as Indus. The traditional divisions of India, according to ancient literature, are five-fold. These are: (1) *Uttarapatha* or *Udichya* (North and North-West India), (2) *Madhyadesha* (centre of the Indo-Gangetic plain extending from the river Saraswati in the west to Banaras in the east), (3) *Aparanta* or *Pratichya* (Western India), (4) *Prachya* or *Purvadesha* (Eastern India) and (5) *Dakshinapatha* (The Deccan).

The connotation of these terms, however, varied from time to time. As such, a strict conformity to fixed geographical limits is not possible. For instance, the term *Uttarapatha* was sometimes used as synonymous with Aryavartta to denote the entire stretch lying between the Himalayas in the north and the Vindhyas in the south. *Dakshinapatha* was similarly applied in a wider and a narrower sense. According to its wider connotation, it was co-extensive with the whole land south of the Vindhyas including *Tamilakam* or the Tamil countries of the Far South; in the narrower sense it was identified with only the upper limit of the Deccan, north of the Krishna.

History and Geography

The history of a country at certain times transcends the limits of

its geography. India's history is no exception to this rule, for the ancient Indians are known to have extended, at stated periods, the sphere of their activities—commercial, cultural, philanthropical and even political—to lands beyond the mainland, including areas which geographically did not belong to India. Afghanisthan and Baluchistan, for example, are outside the geographical boundaries of India, but both these countries occupy a distinct place in the history of India. From the days of the Mauryas down to those of the Kushans, vast areas on the north-west, beyond the confines of India where the breath of Central Asia is unmistakably perceivable, were politically linked up with the mainland. In much later times, in the days of the Delhi Sultanate and even as late as the second half of the eighteenth century, a common political authority held sway over vast regions of India and Afghanistan. The same applies to the case of Burma. Leaving aside the spread of the religion and culture of the Indian mainland to Suvarnabhumi in remote days of antiquity, the geographical separation of Burma was overcome by the British in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and Burma and India, for all practical purposes two separate geographical entities, remained politically united until as late as 1937. The islands in the Bay of Bengal like the Andaman and Nicobar offer the same example of history overstepping the limits of geography when these were brought under the same political authority that ruled over India till a quarter of a century ago. Ceylon, notwithstanding her geographical isolation from the Indian mainland, was almost a part and parcel of India's ancient history. In comparatively modern times the island kingdom was brought under the domination of the same authority that ruled over the Indian Empire, though Ceylon was more fortunate than the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in that her administrative pattern under the British remained separate from that of India. Thus a student of Indian history cannot and should not confine his attention and enquiries to the mainland of what is geographically known as India, but is expected to include within the sweep of his study countries and islands which, geographically speaking, are not parts of India and belong to altogether separate regions.

Unity in the Midst of Diversity

The diversity of India is apparent. Even a casual look at its physical features, wide differences in its climatic conditions, temperature, altitude and varieties of its flora and fauna will serve as readily

available examples. Such diversities are by no means confined to geographical or natural features only; they also relate to habits of the people, their language, diet, dress, social customs, manners and religion. The racial elements that constitute the Indian population are no less varied, and India has rightly been described as 'an ethnological museum in which numberless races of mankind may be studied'. A modern writer has attempted a vivid portrayal of these diversities in these words: 'Everybody looks different and dresses differently. Complexions range from white to black coffee; noses from Biblical spurs to Mongolian pugs; some people are very tall, others very short. Dress, like a botanical classification, reveals the exact identity of the bearer, his or her religion, caste, region and occupation. The variety is endless.' So it is. But to lay stress on these varieties is to miss a subtle but vital fact about India and its people. This is what Vincent Smith long ago described as the 'Fundamental Unity of India'. An unobservant mind is likely to miss it, for it often tends to be elusive. Some seek this unity, which transcends all forms of outward diversities, in the name '*Bharat*' or '*Bharatvarsha*' itself by which this vast sub-continent was and is still known. This common heritage of a common country no doubt fosters a sense of belonging and unity. But the mere fact of a geographical entity is not necessarily conducive to the growth of a sense of fundamental unity except perhaps on a hypothetical level. It requires more than that to promote real, feasible unity. What then is the source of this unity which observant minds cannot miss?

The answer lies in the overwhelming impact of *Hinduism* on the Indian mind. India is a land of diverse religious faiths, but the influence of Hinduism easily transcends that of any other single religion. This is mainly due to the comprehensive and indeed, all-embracing pervasiveness of Hinduism. Like Christianity in the continent of Europe, Hinduism in India has provided an attitude and way of thinking which is shared and cherished even by those who do not profess this faith. The Muslims (the large majority of whom were originally Indian Hindus and Hinduised Buddhists), the Jews and the Christians, not to speak of the Buddhists and the Sikhs, have unquestioningly adopted the norms and ways of life specially associated with Hinduism. Hinduism, it is necessary to remember, is not a mere form of religious approach or system; it is, more truly, as Dr. Radhakrishnan described it, 'a mosaic of almost all types and stages of religious aspiration and endeavour'. As such, it was possible for

Hinduism to make its influence felt on the non-Hindu population in a decisive manner. Sanskrit, the language in which the original religious and secular books of the Hindus were composed, served for long as a sort of *lingua franca*. The Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and religious texts like the *Vedas* and the *Puranas* hold sway over the minds of the Indian people, irrespective of the areas of the country where they live. The temples dedicated to various deities known to the Hindu pantheon and situated as far away as the Himalayas and the Krishna or Kaveri delta, are visited by devotees from all parts of the country. The Hindu holy places scattered all over the vast Indian mainland, from the Himalayan ranges in the north to Cape Comorin in the south, similarly served as bonds of country-wide unity. The sanctity attributed to the rivers and mountains and the veneration shown to the Brahmans by the Hindus have been conceded by people belonging to other religious denominations. Even caste, an institution peculiar to India and originally confined to the Hindus, has won tacit recognition in non-Hindu Indian circles.

Political unity is often a bond of national solidarity. In pre-British times, India, as a whole, was only in exceptional cases brought under the aegis of a common political authority, though the concept of an all-pervading *Chakravartin* ruler was by no means lacking. But the history of India illustrates the fact that cultural unity is a much stronger unifying force than political cohesion effected through coercive measures. The history of ancient Greece, no less than of ancient India, is a well-known example of this singular phenomenon.

The concept of unity such as developed in India can be understood only in the context of the working of the Indian mind. It is related to an attitude, an approach to life and environment, a way of life possessing a distinct set of moral and mental qualities and a sense of values. This has persisted throughout the ages, surviving the onslaught of all manner of political and external changes, and giving shape to all things. 'That unity,' observed Jawaharlal Nehru, 'was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardisation of externals or even of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.' These assimilating and all-absorbing attributes of the Indian mind on the one hand, and the acceptance of a common sense of value on things essential, and of outlook on life on the other, have imparted to

the Indians a distinctive and integral character of their own, marking them out from the rest of the people of the world.

The Discovery of India

The most distinctive feature of the Indian civilisation is its continuity. The only other country in the world that can reasonably claim similar and unbroken continuity of culture (leaving aside the latest claim of a cultural revolution) is China. In the case of other major and well-known seats of ancient civilisation like Egypt, Iran, Greece and the Aegean Islands, unbridgeable gaps have emerged between the ancient and the modern and the continuity is irretrievably broken. But not so in the case of India. An average Indian still preserves veneration for ideals and concepts which his ancestors, thousands of years ago, cherished. He takes a natural pride in the antiquity of his culture and history. But his knowledge of the ancient times for many years was at best vague and conjectural. His veneration for the past easily outran his knowledge of the evolution of his country's past.

If the average Indian, for long years, was uninformed, the average non-Indian was uninterested. The Greeks and the Arabs no doubt evinced considerable interest in India and the Indians. But their successors showed a lamentable lack of interest. With the beginning of geographical explorations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a new interest about India made itself manifest in the Western countries. But that interest was confined to the study of trade prospects. At a later stage when trade gave way to political domination, the interest of the ruling authorities was, understandably enough, mainly concerned with the study of revenue and administrative problems. In the late eighteenth century, however, a new interest was awakened in the circle of the administrators. Warren Hastings was imaginative enough to promote enquiries into the ancient Sanskrit and Persian texts. He was fortunate to have among his contemporaries in India a number of devoted scholars who engaged themselves in the unravelling of the mysteries of the oriental lore. The most remarkable among them was Sir William Jones (1746-1794) who came to Calcutta on being appointed a judge of the Supreme Court. An orientalist *par excellence*, Jones was conversant with Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Turkish and had a smattering of Chinese. To these he added a knowledge of Sanskrit. With such extraordinary equipment at his disposal Jones applied himself to the task of discovering India

through her unexplored literature. The Asiatic Society of which he was the founder and the first President did excellent work in making known to the scholarly world the richness and variety of India's literary attainments. Jones was the first to realise the affinity between Sanskrit, Persian, Greek and Latin and to suggest a common origin for them. His findings were epoch-making. They led on to the birth and growth of a branch of new discipline, known as comparative philology. This new discipline conformed to the theory of Jones and established the important fact that Sanskrit, Persian, Greek and Latin, conveniently known as Indo-European languages, had a common origin and also that the people speaking these languages had originally a common homeland.

The researches initiated by Sir William Jones were followed by a band of devoted persons who, in spite of the burden of their administrative work, found time for the pursuit of indological investigation. In 1784 Charles Wilkins (1749-1836) completed his translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the first Sanskrit work to be rendered into English. His next venture was an English translation of the well-known Sanskrit work *Hitopadesha* (1787). Two years later Jones himself brought out Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* and then *Gitagovinda* by Jayadeva and the *Manava-Dharmasashtra* attributed to Manu. Other collaborators in the work started by Jones and followed by Wilkins were Henry Colebrooke (1765-1837) and Horace Hayman Wilson (1789-1860) both of whom had to their credit valuable contributions in the sphere of indology.

Indology had its votaries on the continent as well. In 1786 the celebrated French scholar Anquetil-Duperron brought out a translation of several *Upanishads*. In France as also in England institutions pledged to the pursuit of indological studies were founded. Germany too caught the spirit. In 1816 Franz Bopp (1791-1867), a Bavarian, enriched the field of comparative philology with the fruits of his remarkable investigation. Two other German scholars, Otto Böhtingk and Rudolf Roth, brought out their monumental work, the well-known *Sanskrit-German Dictionary*, published by the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences. In Max Müller, German scholarship in the study of oriental subjects found its greatest exponent.

The explorations by the Indologists were not confined to literary fields alone. Epigraphic records too did not fail to rouse their interest. A large number of inscriptions, specially those of Asoka, the great Maurya Emperor, had long ago been discovered, but the writings on

them could not be deciphered. Attempts at decipherment are known to have been made as early as the days of Firuz Shah Tughluk and Emperor Akbar, but without success. It was destined for James Prinsep, an official attached to the Calcutta Mint, to decipher the Brahmi Script in which the Asokan edicts were engraved. It was a momentous discovery and it brought to light many items of valuable information not known or thought of before. Indian archaeology similarly found a great exponent in Alexander Cunningham who, like James Prinsep, had begun his career as an officer in the service of the East India Company, and like him made accessible to posterity the fruits of his discoveries through excavation. The work initiated by Cunningham was carried on in later days with great zeal by Marshall and Mortimer Wheeler. These resulted in the unearthing of the treasures of the Indus Valley civilisation from underneath the mounds of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Indian scholars did not lag behind. Sanskritists and epigraphists like Bhagavanlal Indraji, Rajendralal Mitra, R. G. Bhandarkar and R. D. Banerji, among others, rendered conspicuous service in rediscovering the forgotten or only partly-known history of their country.

In assessing the importance of the Indologists of the last two centuries it has been observed that the image presented by them of ancient India overstressed 'non-modern, non-utilitarian aspects of Indian culture, where the existence of a continuity of religion of over three thousand years was acclaimed; and where it was believed that the Indian pattern of life was so concerned with metaphysics and the subtleties of religious belief that there was no time for the mundane things of life.' With many of them, romanticism got the better of objectivity. This, however, is only partially correct. It cannot be denied that the labour and writings of the early Western Indologists went a long way in not only rekindling vital interest about India but also in providing materials for the reconstruction of her history.

Source Materials

The theme of the discovery of India leads logically to the subject of source materials of ancient Indian history. The absence of ancient historical literature is readily understood. It is true that 'No Thucydides or Tacitus has left for posterity a genuine history of Ancient India.' Whether or not such works are lost or were never attempted, whether this deficiency is due to the influence of the climate or the work of insect pests or the outcome of political revolution through

which India passed, or is to be attributed to the fact that the philosophers and writers of ancient India were interested in what life should be rather than what it was, and therefore did not consider it worth while to write an account of events and material achievements—is at best an unprofitable speculation. What is more important is to recall that 'the patient investigations of numerous scholars and archaeologists have opened up rich stores of material for the reconstruction of the ancient history of our country.'

Literary Sources—(*a*) *Indian Account*: Notwithstanding the deficiency of historical literature, literary works composed in ancient times are by no means inconsiderable. These are primarily religious texts or commentaries, works on metaphysics, epics, institutes of laws, grammar, etc. They are not intended to deal with history, but underlying them there are items of or hints on historical information which only laborious study can detect. The Vedas, specially the Rik, the earliest literary composition, throw some light on the progress of Aryan settlement in India, their conflict with the non-Aryans, and provide glimpses of the social life, religious beliefs and of institutions that prevailed in the Vedic days. The Jain and Buddhist religious works similarly contain casual references to historical persons and events associated with them. Grammatical works of Panini and Patanjali as well as astronomical treatises like *Gargi-Samhita* have been made to yield items of historical information. The *Epics* are, however, of much greater help. They provide us with ampler materials for the reconstruction of social, cultural, economic and partly political history. But the chronology is of a very poor order. The *Puranas* do little to remove this deficiency except in so far as they contain *Vamsanucharita* or the dynastic history of the old kings. Even then their limitations are obvious. For one thing it is not possible to assign the Puranas to any definite scheme of chronology; for another, such genealogies are provided in six out of eighteen Puranas. None of these sources, however, give us any connected narrative history. This bears out the unpleasant truth of Alberuni's stricture that 'the Hindus do not pay much attention to historical order of things; they are very careless in relating the chronological succession of their kings and when they are pressed for information and are at a loss not knowing what to say, they invariably take to tale-telling', or the regret sympathetically expressed by Col. Tod about 'the sterility of the historical muse' in India.

The position begins to improve to some extent as we come down

to later years. From the seventh century A.D. we come across biographical works on well-known royal individuals like *Harsha-charita* by Banabhatta, *Vikramankadeva-charita* by Bilhana, *Navasahasanka-charita* by Padmagupta, *Ramacharita* by Sandhyakaranandi, *Kumarapala-charita* by Jayasinha and *Hammira-Kavya* by Nayachandra. There are besides historical works dealing with particular episodes or regions like *Prithviraja-Vijaya-Mahakavya* probably written by a Kashmiri poet, Jayanak, and *Gaudavaho* by Vakpatiraja. Allegorical dramas like *Prabodhachandrodaya* written by Krishnamishra also contain references to important contemporary historical events. But for historical works in the usual sense of the term we have to wait till the twelfth century A.D. when Kalhana composed his *Rajatarangini*. It gives us a more or less reliable and connected account of the kingdom of Kashmir, particularly with reference to the period from the seventh and eighth centuries, though it opens with much earlier times.

An account of ancient Indian historical literature will be incomplete without a reference to several works on local history written mostly in Tamil and dealing with South India, such as *Nandikkalambakam*, Ottakkuttan's *Kulottunga-Pillaittamil*, Jayagondar's *Kalingattu-pparani* and *Rajaraja-Solan-Ula*.

(*b*) *Foreign Literary Evidence*: The comparative deficiency of Indian historical literature has been largely made up by the accounts derived from foreign sources. These are mostly literary works, though valuable and interesting accounts of the Persian invasion and occupation may be obtained from the inscriptions of Darius. The coins of the Bactrian and other foreign rulers are also important aids to our knowledge of ancient history.

The foreign literary sources are of two types—those left by chroniclers like Herodotus and Ktesias who never visited India and those derived from the notices and writings of such foreigners as actually paid visits to the country for one reason or another. The first among the foreigners to have written about India were the Greeks. The earliest among them came to India in the company of Alexander the Great. Their accounts, though lost, survive in the form of extracts quoted by later Greek and Roman writers like Quintus Curtius, Diodorus, Sicilus, Arrian, Plutarch and others. The importance of these writings may be measured from the fact that but for them the story of the Macedonian invasion, not dealt with in any Indian work, would have remained unknown to us. The first Greek official account

of India was the *Indika* of Megasthenes who came to the court of Chandragupta Maurya as the royal ambassador from the court of the Greek King of Syria. Unfortunately, the work of Megasthenes has not come down to us, except in the form of fragments, being quotations of extracts from the original by later classical writers, like Arrian, Appian, Strabo, Justin, Plutarch and others. In spite of occasional lack of critical judgement displayed by the ambassador-historian and his proneness to idealising tendencies, the work, mutilated though, is a valuable contribution to India's history. It is generally reliable in so far as it deals with the imperial city of Pataliputra, the court, the camp, the structure of administration, geography and products of the soil. Valuable information on ancient Indian geography and trade-routes is supplied by the unknown Greek navigator who wrote *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (first century A.D.) and Ptolemy, the celebrated author of Geography composed about 130 A.D.

The Chinese pilgrims and travellers to India also rendered conspicuous service in the matter of providing ancient India with important source materials. The narratives of travel left by *Fa-Hien* (399-414 A.D.), *Hiuen Tsang* (629-645 A.D.) and *It-Sing* (*c.* 673-695 A.D.) throw considerable light on the history of India, her people, society, education and institutions. Being contemporary accounts they possess additional importance. 'A book on the early history of Hindu India,' it has been well observed, 'could have been a very meagre and dry record but for the narrations of the pilgrims which are full of vivid detail.'

Next in chronological order comes the well-known work, *Tahkik-i-Hind* written in the early eleventh century by the profound Muslim scholar and astronomer Alberuni. He not only visited India but took pains to learn Sanskrit and brought his alert and observant mind to bear upon his account of contemporary India. Among less known but hardly unimportant are the accounts left by the Arab travellers and merchants like Al Biladâri, Sulaiman and Al Masudi whose accounts throw interesting light on the transitional phase of Indian history which marked the beginning of the decline of the old Indian ruling powers.

The accounts of the foreigners are of special significance in that they help us to provide the ancient history of India with a definite chronology. In fact the dated history of India, strictly speaking, begins with Alexander's invasion and the line between undated and dated history

could not have been drawn but for the evidence preserved in foreign records.

Archaeological Evidence—(*a*) *Epigraphic* (*Inscriptions*): The earliest Indian inscriptions are those discovered from the ruined cities of the Indus Valley. But since it has not been possible to decipher them so far, their value is much less than what it might have been. Inscriptions discovered in foreign countries, like those of Boghaz-Koi (Assyria), Behistun, Persepolis and Naksh-i-Rustam, written in foreign scripts, offer interesting information on the impact of India's contact with foreign lands and Persian conquest of territories along the north-western frontier. The earliest inscriptions discovered on the Indian soil (leaving aside Harappa and Mohenjodaro seals) belong to the fifth or fourth century B.C. The number increases as we come to later times, running to thousands, though it is permissible to guess that quite a large number still lie buried or unexplored, awaiting the excavator's tools. Written in different languages and dialects, they are engraved on a variety of materials—stone, rock, pillar, caves, metal plates, clay earthenware, etc. The large majority of them are written in old *Brahmi* scripts (left to right). The importance of some of these inscriptions like the Asokan Edicts is too apparent to be dwelt upon. Some of the old inscriptions are specimens of excellent literary composition while others are couched in ornate and flamboyant conventional phraseology. They are nevertheless important in that they help us to reconstruct important phases of history by supplying us with valuable data regarding dates, names of kings, main events of particular reigns, order of succession, extent of dominions ruled over by them, besides other relevant details. Mention may be made in this connection of the Hatigumpha Inscription of Kharavela, Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman and the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, whose importance as first-rate sources of contemporary history cannot be overstressed.

(*b*) *Numismatic* (*Coins*): Coins are indispensable aids to the reconstruction of history and much knowledge of ancient India would have remained beyond our reach but for them. In particular, the coins of the Kushan, Bactrian, Indo-Greek, Parthian and Saka rulers of ancient India are of great importance, not only corroborating evidence derived from other sources, but also yielding vital additional information. The coins of the Kushan period, for example, help us to identify the religious inclinations of the contemporary rulers, the extent of their dominions and the nature and scope of trade with

foreign countries. The Gupta coins throw considerable light not only on the personal attainments and religious preferences of rulers like Samudragupta but also on the economic conditions of the age through the study of the metal used in the making of the coins. The coins, as a rule, also supply us with data for the purpose of determining chronology with any amount of precision.

(*c*) *Monuments and Relics*: Monuments or their ruins are also to be included under the category of archaeological evidence. They are specially valuable from the point of view of socio-economic and cultural history. Incidentally they throw light on dates and also indirectly reflect the economic condition of the days when they were built. The archaeological remains of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, for instance, place before us a portrayal of city life lived five thousand years before our own times. Non-monumental relics like the tools, utensils, grave goods, pottery, etc., are also valuable aids to ancient history.

These are particularly valuable in regard to the period when the writing method was yet to be evolved. It should, however, be remembered that neither the available literary sources, Indian as well as foreign, nor the numerous epigraphic finds suffice for a reasonable reconstruction of ancient history. Nor are they of any help whatsoever in respect of prehistoric ages. Here we have solely to depend upon the few archaeological remains unearthed so far. They are also indispensable aids with regard to historic times, for these alone enable us to study the tools and implements of production without which a people's history cannot be understood. The lacunae in text-oriented history of India can only be removed by archaeological evidence, if and when available.

CHAPTER TWO

PREHISTORIC AGE AND THE VEDIC PERIOD

THE history of Indian civilisation dates back to a period separated by nearly five thousand years from our times. This presupposes that long before this civilisation came to flourish in a mature form, there must have been a long period of preparation forming the background of its birth and early growth. Unfortunately the materials available so far do not give us the story of the background of either the pre-Indus Valley or of the Vedic civilisation. The period, as such, is relegated to the realm of prehistory.

The Palaeolithic Age: India was not only one of the cradles of civilisation; she was also, in all probability, one of the earliest seats of human habitation. Little, however, is known of the races and peoples of India who lived in the prehistoric days of remote antiquity. It has been supposed that human specimens lived in parts of India even in the Second Ice Age and the archaeologists claim that their remains have been traced in parts of the Punjab and of South India as early as between 400,000 and 200,000 B.C. It is, however, curious that not a single human fossil specimen of this early period has so far come to light.

The primitive or the earliest known man in India belonged to what is known as the *Palaeolithic* or Old Stone Age. He earned his living by gathering food and by fishing and hunting. The community to which he belonged was small in number and nomadic in habits. He used rough and rude weapons made of quartzite type of chipped rocks. In course of time he learnt the use of fire and to protect his body against weather by covering himself with skin, bark or leaves. He was still a food-gatherer and not a producer of food. He probably belonged to the Negrito branch of the Negro race who are known to have lived along the maritime coast from Arabia to China and whose descendants may be found today among the dwellers of the Andaman Islands. The relics of the Old Stone Age have been discovered in several parts of India and, in particular, in the areas along the eastern coast-land.

The Neolithic Age: The Negritos were followed by the Proto-Australoids whose arrival in India is supposed to have marked the advent of the Neolithic or New Stone Age. The relics of this age have been discovered from nearly all parts of India. They show that the people living in this age were acquainted with the use of better and more

polished types of weapons made of finely cut and chiselled stones—scrapers, cleavers, flakes, arrowheads and microliths—settled modes of life and technique of agriculture. From the evidence of archaeological findings it appears that they lived in huts made of mud-brick and knew the technique of painted pottery. Among the interesting relics of this age are small and well-designed boxes of soft stone with delicate decorations of linear pattern. The neolithic men also tamed domestic animals like the ox and the goat. Apart from houses of mud-brick they also lived in caves whose exterior walls were often decorated with coloured paintings. They also knew the art of spinning cotton and weaving clothes. It also appears that they constructed boats and went out on the sea. They used to bury their dead in tombs. A number of megalithic tombs of the neolithic age have been unearthed. They show remarkable affinity with the tombs made in the same age in other parts of the world.

The earliest remains of the New Stone Age dating back to the fourth millennium B.C. have been found in Baluchistan and lower Indus valley.

The Metal Age: The transition from the Neolithic to the Metal Age in India is not as marked as it is in most other ancient countries. It is possible that even in the Neolithic Age the use of metals had come in vogue. What is, however, beyond dispute is that a mature civilisation was already in existence in large areas watered by the Indus at least 3000 years before the birth of Christ.

The use of metals marks a distinct forward step in the march towards civilisation. But it is not possible to fix with certainty the date to which the introduction and use of metals may be assigned. Whether metals were already in use in the Neolithic Age is a matter on which opinion is divided. But it is beyond dispute that in the years succeeding the New Stone Age metals were in extensive use in India. Of course all kinds of metals did not come into use all over the country at the same point of time.

Archaeological evidence points to the fact that in Northern India copper replaced stone in the making of ordinary utensils, tools and weapons. Large quantities of copper relics have been discovered with the aid of excavation from extensive sites in Northern India 'almost from the Hooghly to the far side of the Indus, from the foot of the Himalayas to the Cawnpore District.' At a later date copper gave place to iron, so that, so far as Northern India is concerned, there are two distinct stages of the Metal Age—the age of copper

and that of iron. On the basis of evidence recorded in the *Atharvaveda* it appears that iron was already in use in Northern India in 1000 B.C. In South India, however, there was no copper intermediary and the transition from stone to iron was direct. This was perhaps due to the ready availability of sources of iron from several parts of South and Western India. Unlike in European countries bronze did not come into general use in India. With the advent of the iron age prehistory ends and the historical period begins.

The Dravidians: The transition from the New Stone to the Metal Age was preceded by a fresh advent of racial elements. Among the successors of the Proto-Australoid were the Mongoloid, the Mediterranean, the Western Brachycephalous and the Nordic (Aryan). They retained their identity for some time before an intermingling of races took place. One of the branches of the Mediterranean race, named the Dravidians, outstripped their contemporaries and contributed most remarkably to the growth and maturity of the Metal Age. The Dravidians were fully conversant with the use of metals and acquired remarkable proficiency as is borne out by the relics of their pottery with polychrome decorations. They were a settled people who practised intensive cultivation of land. They lived in villages which were often provided with forts for defensive purposes. Their usual weapons of warfare consisted of bows, arrows, spears and swords. The areas inhabited by them were divided into small states each of which was ruled by a king. They worshipped the Mother-Goddess besides totem-symbols. Their society was largely matriarchal. For many years they stuck to the old practice of burying their dead till they adopted cremation as a method for the disposal of dead bodies. Their earlier tombs discovered in N. W. India and Sind show the extensive use of metals for making weapons and ornaments. As a sea-faring people they evinced considerable vigour and set up centres of trade along the Southern coast-line, Ceylon and the Indian Archipelago. In the opinion of Kern, the earliest Indian colonists in Sumatra were of Dravidian origin.

The contribution of the Aryans to the making of the Indian civilisation is important enough; but that of the Dravidians who had been living in the land from much earlier times and who survived the Aryan challenge, is by no means inconsiderable.

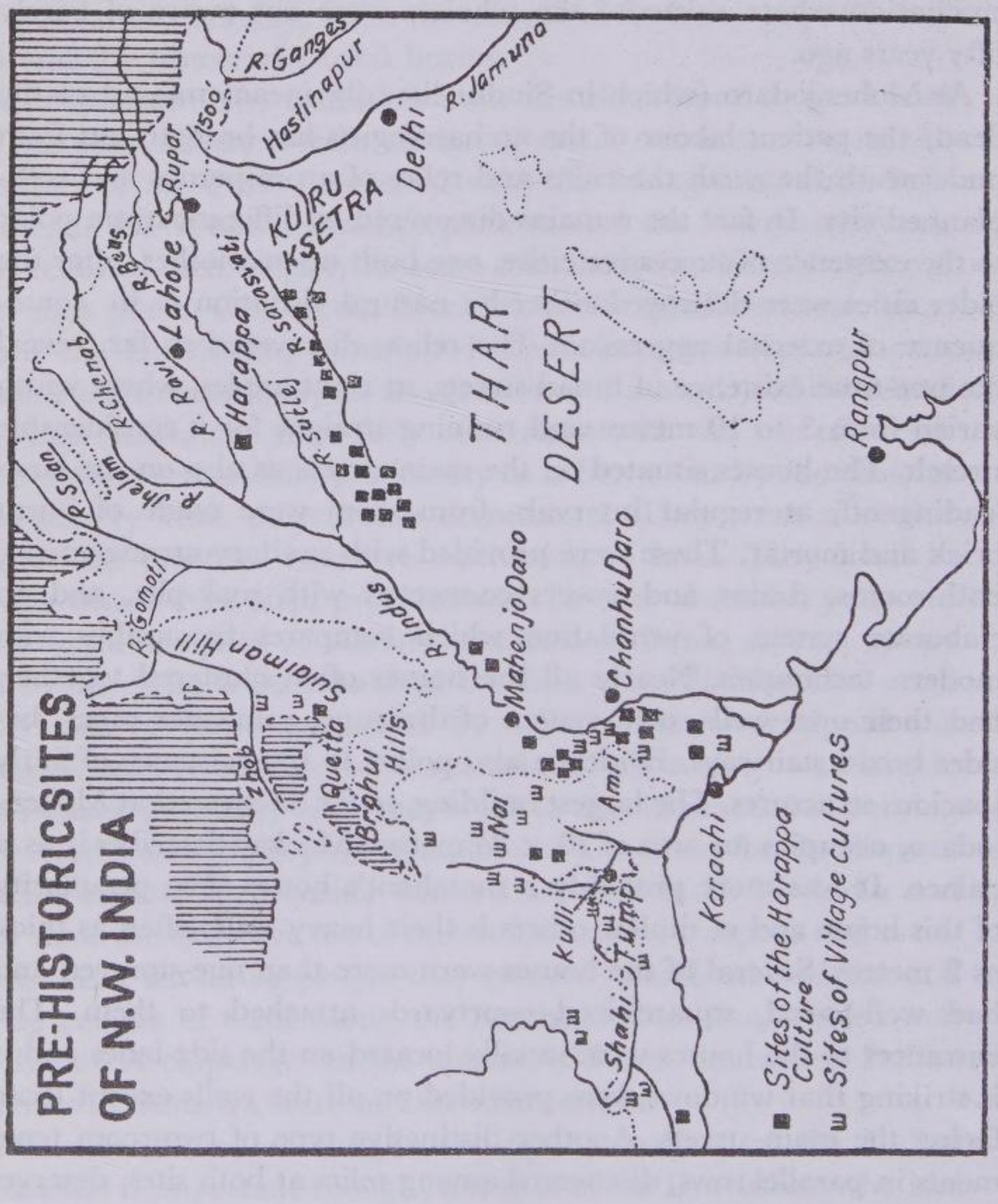
The Indus Valley Civilisation—Its Remains

Early civilisation, for obvious reasons, chose the Nile Valley in

Egypt, Tigris-Euphrates in the Mesopotamian Valley and the Indus Valley as its fields for growth and expansion.

The archaeological discoveries of two very ancient sites, one at Mohenjodaro in Larkana district, Sind and the other at Harappa in Montgomery district, both in Pakistan, have provided us with materials for the reconstruction of the story of a very old and mature civilisation whose existence the scholars were not aware of barely fifty years ago.

At Mohenjodaro (which in Sindhi literally means mound of the dead) the patient labour of the archaeologists has brought out from underneath the earth the ruins and relics of a prosperous and well-planned city. In fact the remains discovered in different strata point to the existence of successive cities, one built upon another, after the older cities were destroyed either by natural visitation or in consequence of external aggression. The relics, discovered so far, reveal the one-time existence of broad streets, at right angles, whose width varied from 3 to 10 metres and running straight for a considerable stretch. The houses situated on the main streets as also on the lanes leading off, at regular intervals, from them were made of burnt brick and mortar. These were provided with sanitary arrangements, bath-rooms, drains and sewers connected with soak-pits, and an elaborate system of ventilation which compares favourably with modern techniques. Nearly all the houses often clustered together, had their own wells, own system of drainage, rainwater pipes, besides broad stairways. Evidence also points to the existence of fairly spacious structures. The largest building, so far discovered at Mohenjodaro, occupies an area of 70 $\times$ 24 metres. Mackay describes it as a palace. It was more probably a merchant's house. The peculiarity of this house and of similar others is their heavy walls often as thick as 2 metres. Several of the houses were more than one-storeyed and had well-paved, square-sized courtyards attached to them. The entrances to the houses were usually located on the side-lanes and it is striking that windows were provided on all the walls except those facing the main streets. Another distinctive type of two-room tenements in parallel rows, discovered among relics at both sites, deserves special mention. At Harappa the tenements are situated very close to circular shaped brick floors on which grain was pounded. It has been supposed that these rooms of uniform shape were 'coolie lines' and in the absence of definite evidence to the contrary, they may be accepted as such. Among other distinctive features of the city of


PRE-HISTORIC SITES
OF N.W. INDIA
R. Ganges
Hastinapur
R. Jamuna
Delhi
KURU KSETRA
Rupar
R. Ravi
Lahore
R. Beas
R. Chenab
R. Jhelum
R. Soan
R. Saraswati
Harappa
R. Sutlej
THAR
DESERT
Rangpur
R. Gomati
Sulaiman Hill
Quetta
Brahui Hills
R. Indus
Mahenjo Daro
Chanhu Daro
Nal
Amri
Kulli
Shahi Tumpa
Karachi
Sites of the Harappa Culture
Sites of Village cultures

Mohenjodaro are the State Granary described as 'the economic focus of the regime' and the embankment designed to protect the city against the floods of the Indus. There is besides the evidence of the existence of a citadel, at each site, approximately 12 to 16 metres high, accommodating ritual buildings and places of assembly. The lack of decorations or embellishments on the exterior walls of the houses is yet another striking feature. The city with its dwelling houses and markets stood below the citadel.

At Mohenjodaro a strikingly large structure known as the Great Bath has been discovered. It measures 54 × 33 metres; at its centre is the bath pool covering an area 12 metres long and 2.5 metres deep. The quadrangle in which the pool stands is surrounded by rows of rooms and galleries provided with spacious vernadahs. The pool itself was made water-tight by walls and floors of bricks and bitumen with provision for letting in water from an adjacent deep well and for letting out the same, if and when needed.

The relics of the streets, houses, public assemblies, citadel and state granaries are suggestive of an advanced technique of city planning and organisation.

Among other interesting remains of the Indus Valley culture are the small seals of various shapes, square and oblong plaques, with inscriptions accompanied with pictorial motif, human or animal. The inscriptions even now await to be deciphered. The seals so far discovered exceed two thousand in number and are made of soft stone known as *steatite*. They were probably tokens of the merchant or possibly marks used to denote the produce of the countryside brought into the cities. It is also possible that they sometimes served as amulets worn by the owners on their persons. Whatsoever they might have been, without decipherment of the inscriptions they are not, at this stage, as important as they might have been.

Among other relics from underneath the surface are included objects made of different metals: gold, silver, copper, tin and lead. Iron does not seem to have been in use. The objects discovered were of a varied kind like ornaments such as necklaces, anklets, ear-rings and beads, made of gold, silver and ivory, household utensils, mostly earthenware and occasionally of porcelain, copper and bronze like bowls, dishes, cups and saucers, vases, basins and jars of different shapes and sizes as well as glazed pottery, weapons like maces, axes, spears, bows, arrows, daggers, slings (swords and defensive weapons like shields and armour are conspicuously absent) and objects of

daily use like knives, chisels, sickles, fish-hooks and razors. Among stone-made objects, weights, marble and dice deserve to be mentioned. The weights, in particular, are noteworthy. Some of them were cubical, others conical in shape. They are claimed to have possessed 'greater accuracy and consistency than those of Elam and Mesopotamia'. Children's toys, generally made of clay, discovered in these sites, consist of models of birds, animals, human figures, carts and chairs. Among other interesting finds are spindles, spindle whorls, stone images and statuettes.

(*a*) *Life and Conditions in the Indus Valley*: From the study of the archaeological remains it is possible to reconstruct a picture of the life and conditions of the Indus Valley and its people. It appears that the people of the age were acquainted with the modes and amenities of urban civilised life. On a study of the scientific and elaborate planning of the cities, and in particular, of the sewerage system, it has been supposed that 'this was maintained by some municipal agent and is one of the most impressive of their achievements. No other ancient civilisation until that of the Romans had so sufficient system of drains'. From the layout, size and architecture of the houses, the average among the smaller ones being nine metres square, it would appear that these were owned by fairly well-to-do people forming a solid and important middle-class. The existence of a proletariat is also suggested by the discovery of the so-called 'coolie lines'. The relics also testify to the existence of professional classes like the weaver, potter, carpenter, mason, stone-cutter, the jeweller and the ivory-worker. From the study of the finds it is also possible to reasonably conjecture considerable progress in technical knowledge as suggested by the potter's wheel, the casting of metals and the boring of hard substances. It also appears that the people living in that age had attained a high level of material development. This is borne out by the comparatively extensive trade they were engaged in, not only with such widely separated areas in India as Baluchistan, Kathiawar and the Deccan but also with countries beyond India, such as Persia and Central Asian countries. It is significant that a number of typical Indus Valley seals and a few other objects have been traced in Sumer dating between 2300 and 2000 B.C. As a modern writer observes, 'The trade of the city is not to be doubted from the beautifully adjusted standard weights which remain unchanged in all the archaeological history of the place. Some of the weights are so small that they could only have been utilised for careful weigh-

ment of precious commodities.' The granaries and the implements of cultivation point to a highly developed state of agriculture.

The main food crops grown in these riparian areas were wheat, barley, peas and sesamum. Milk and dates were in demand. Meat, fish and vegetables were accepted as normal food items. The dress of the men consisted of two pieces of cotton fabrics—one thrown over the left shoulder and passing under the right arm, the other worn round the waist. The use of wool as material of winter garment was also known. Ornaments made of gold, silver and precious stones were worn both by men and women. Some of the jewelleries displayed exquisite skill in polish and delicacy in taste and execution.

The animals domesticated by them were bulls, cows, buffaloes, sheep, camels, goats, pigs and probably also dogs. Horses, in all probability, were not made use of as domestic animals till much later days.

The relics of utensils, weapons, toys and, above all, seals with pictorial motifs and statuettes indicated a high level of artistic skill. It is true that decorative designs are lacking in the structure of their houses, both private and public, but the seal engravings, models and terracotta statuettes do bear marks of artistic skill of a high order. The human and animal figures like that of the dancing girl and those of the humped bull, rhinoceros, tiger and monkeys are striking examples of mature artistic skill.

Few or no glimpses are provided by the archaeological remains into the religious concept or practice of the Indus Valley people. No positive trace of a temple or house of worship has been found among the relics discovered so far. The seals and statuettes, however, point to the worship of a Mother Goddess as well as of a three-faced (?) male divinity, wearing a peculiar head-dress consisting of a pair of horns. He is depicted on the seals as surrounded by four animals—an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros and a buffalo. Beneath his stool are depicted a couple of deer. Marshall's description of this deity as 'Proto-Siva' has been generally accepted. Animism also prevailed. Trees like pipal, beasts like the bull and snakes were endowed with elements of divinity. On the evidence of many cone-shaped objects, reminiscent of the phallus, it has been supposed that phallic worship had also its place in the Harappan cult of religions.

The method of disposal of the dead in the Indus Valley sites was not known with any amount of certainty for many years till in 1946

excavation conducted by Sir Mortimer Wheeler proved that the usual method for the disposal of the dead was burial.

No glimpse of the political life of the Harappan age can be obtained from the remains discovered so far. Nevertheless it was suggested that the cities of those days were oligarchic commercial republics. This has not, however, been accepted by all. Some would prefer to believe that the Indus Valley polity corresponded to the norms of a single centralised state rather than of free communities. This theory rests on the study of the layout of the great cities, the regular planning of the streets and the uniformity of weights and measures prevalent therein. Mortimer Wheeler goes a step farther and says that he is tempted to infer 'something like an imperial status for so uniform a civilisation, perhaps with the metropolitan duality which was later to mark the Kushan, Arab and Mogul regimes in Northern India and seems indeed to be endemic in that spacious land. If at any rate the underlying inference is correct, as it may be, then the Indus civilisation exemplifies the vastest political experiment before the advent of the Roman Empire.' But this again is a mere conjecture and a definite conclusion must await the discovery of further relevant materials.

Whatsoever little we may know about the political life of the Indus Valley it is beyond dispute that the state of social, economic and cultural life as revealed by the remains was inevitably the outcome of many centuries of development.

(*b*) *Problems of the Indus Valley Civilisation*: The study of the Indus Valley civilisation, however interesting, is not without its problems. The main problems may be summed up as four—centred round (*a*) date, (*b*) authorship, (*c*) extent and (*d*) relations with contemporaneous civilisations.

Date: The Nile and Mesopotamian Valley civilisations do not offer any problem in regard to dates since written records which have been deciphered testify to their age. But a decipherment of the Indus Valley script which alone can determine the date with any approximation to certainty is still awaited. Another difficulty arises from the fact that the archaeological excavations have not so far revealed to us, because of subsoil water, the contents of the lowest strata of the sites, which alone can take us to the earliest stage of its development.

At the present stage it is generally supposed that the early part of the third millennium B.C. already witnessed the Indus Valley civili-

sation in a full state of development. The lower limit of the age has been assigned to the later half of the second millennium B.C. on the ground that iron whose use was then known in the Middle Eastern countries has not been found in any of the sites of the Indus Valley. The upper limit is more difficult to suggest in view of the absence of written records and incomplete state of excavation as noted above. Geologists have, however, suggested at least 2800 B.C. as the probable date of the upper limit of the civilisation on the basis of a study of the layer of earth in which relics have been discovered. This has been strengthened by the archaeological evidence referred to by Dr. Frankfort who has discovered cylinder seals of Indian origin at Tell Asmar assignable to 2800 B.C. Dr. Gadd similarly refers to seals of the Indus Valley type found in Mesopotamia indicating the same date as the upper limit of the Harappa culture. Some scholars are inclined to push back the limit by two thousand years more, if not earlier, on grounds of ceramic evidence discovered at Amri. In such case 3000 B.C. may be accepted as the upper limit of the Indus Valley civilisation.

Authors: The question as to who were the makers of this remarkable civilisation, comparable to the better advertised culture of the Nile and Mesopotamian Valleys, does not admit of an easy answer. As no conclusive evidence is forthcoming on the subject, speculation has been fairly active and such numerous and distinctive peoples as the Dravidians, Brahuis, Sumerians, Asuras, Dasas, Nagas and Aryans have been suggested by different scholars as the authors of the Indus Valley civilisation. None of these identifications is conclusive but evidence, available so far, favours the probability of the Dravidian-speaking population being greater than that in the case of others in the list. There is evidence no doubt of the contact between the Sumerians and the contemporary Indus Valley people, but there is hardly any evidence to support the theory that the Sumerians were the makers of this civilisation. The claim with regard to the Asuras, Nagas and Dasas may be dismissed with much less difficulty, because there is no evidence worth its name to identify them with any one of the known races.

The suggestion that the Aryans were the authors of this culture presupposes their arrival in India before the third millennium B.C. for which evidence is lacking. In the circumstances it is possible to guess that the founders of the Indus Valley civilisation were pre-Aryans. This does not necessarily amount to saying that its author-

ship is to be attributed to the Dravidians. As a matter of fact the human skeletal remains discovered in the sites of the Indus Valley reveal the existence of diverse racial elements in the population of Harappa and Mohenjodaro like the Mediterranean, the Proto-Australoid (distinct from the Nordic to which the Aryans belonged). A process of intermingling of races started in India even in the days of remote antiquity and it is to the amalgam of diverse races rather than a particular linguistic group like the Dravidians that the authorship of the earliest known civilisation of India may be assigned. This does not necessarily rule out the probability of the Dravidians (belonging to the Mediterranean race) having played a decisive, though by no means, an exclusive role in its making.

Extent: The Indus Valley civilisation had its main centres in Harappa and Mohenjodaro. A distance of 640 kilometres separates one from the other. The civilisation whose relics were unearthed at the two cities was not confined to the original sites of the excavation but included, at the beginning, within its sphere of influence the entire area of 640 kilometres connecting the two cities, situated on the same river system. More investigations and later excavations have revealed that the extent of the civilisation was appreciably much wider than Harappa-Mohenjodaro region. 'Subsequent excavations in a large number of other sites,' it has been said, 'have brought to light prehistoric antiquities representing the identical civilisation and these indicate that Mohenjodaro and Harappa do not mark the extreme limits of its extent.' Traces of this culture have been discovered in extensive areas of Sind and Baluchistan. Chanhudaro and Amri, both situated at a distance of 160 kilometres from Mohenjodaro, are two well-known sites, illustrating the extension of the same civilisation to these areas. That the impact of the Harappan culture extended as far east as Buxar and Pataliputra is borne out by archaeological discoveries of relics which are of the same type as those discovered in the Indus Valley. It travelled northward up to the foot of the Simla Hills—a fact attested by the findings at Rupar on the Sutlej. Similarly, available evidence points to Sutkagendor near the shores of the Arabian sea as its western limit. The southern limit is suggested by areas like Rangpur, Lothal, Somnath as well as Megham, Telod and Bhagertarer situated near the estuaries of the Narbada and the Tapti. 'These extensions,' writes Mortimer Wheeler, '. . . have altered the shape of the civilisation as previously envisaged.'

Relations of the Indus Valley Civilisation with Contemporary Centres of Culture

A cultural force, worth its name, cannot be expected to operate exclusively within its geographical limits. This applies to the cultural stream that took its rise in the Indus Valley in the early part of the third millennium B.C. Two other well-known centres of culture were then located in the Nile and Euphrates-Tigris Valleys. In the circumstances it is only to be expected that the three separate streams, in consequence of the inevitable historical process, should develop close contact with one another. The cultural contact between the three centres is an indisputable historical phenomenon, though it is not possible to apportion the initiative behind the cultural contact among the centres even in a remote manner.

Scholars have noted the affinity between Mesopotamian and Harappan cultures. Middle class well-being, civic consciousness, similarity of seals have been cited as common phenomena between the two cultures. But the point should not be overstressed. As Mortimer Wheeler observes, 'Neither in its ceramic industry nor in its tools and armoury does the Indus civilisation suggest a remotely foreign origin.' In fact differences between the two outweigh their similarities. But while the Indus culture retained peculiarities of its own, commercial contact between India and Mesopotamia, probably through the land-route in Baluchistan, can be detected at a very early date. This accounts for the discovery of Indus seals in several sites of Sumer and Elam and the import of marble seals, carnelian beads and small pottery rings from Sumer to India.

The contact between Egypt and the Indus Valley is even more remote. The evidence at our disposal does not bear out any definite trace of commodities being directly exchanged between the two countries. Some articles supposed to have been of Egyptian make, however, found their way to the Indus Valley through the Elamite and Sumerian intermediaries.

Sir John Marshall claims the superiority of the Indus Valley civilisation to that of Sumer and Egypt or of 'any other civilisation in any part of the world in that period'. He bases his claim on the fact that cotton was in use in the Indus Valley two or three thousand years before it was used in the western world and also points out the greater efficiency attained in India in the erection of baths and commodious houses for the common citizens than ever reached in Egypt or Mesopotamia. To quote his words: 'We are justified in seeing in

the Great Bath of Mohenjodaro and in its many and serviceable houses with their ubiquitous walls and bathrooms and elaborate system of drainage, evidence that ordinary townspeople enjoyed a degree of comfort and luxury unexampled in the other parts of the civilised world.'

Decline and End of the Indus Valley Civilisation

The Indus Valley civilisation entered its phase of decline in the second millennium B.C. and almost completely disintegrated about 1500 B.C. That a mature and well-developed civilisation should have thus declined and ended is a very striking phenomenon. Speculation has been at work to find an explanation for this decline and disintegration. The process of decline of this civilisation, once flourishing over extensive areas, worked over a fairly long period of time and the factors responsible for it differed from region to region. The picture, so far as Mohenjodaro is concerned, is, however, comparatively clear. The archaeologists have noticed progressive deterioration in the construction of buildings nearer the surface. These were positively inferior to the type of buildings found in the lower layers erected earlier. This indicates a decline in the fortunes of the city—a feature which can be partly explained in terms of annual Indus floods. The second factor accounting for the decline is the deforestation of the area owing to the continuous consumption of timber, over a long period of time, for the purpose of house-building. 'This,' Mortimer Wheeler suggests, 'must have checked the transpiration of moisture and reduced the rain-fall....In rough terms, Mohenjodaro was wearing out its landscape, whether by excessive zeal or by excessive indolence. Over the years it was dying long before the final blow.'

That final blow came in the form of external onslaught. This was led by the nomad Aryans between whom and the people of the Valley ensued a long and fierce struggle whose echoes are probably heard in the battle of Hari-Gupia (Harappa?), referred to in the Rigveda and further suggested by the group of huddled human skeletons discovered at Mohenjodaro. The new and more vigorous force represented by the Aryans won in the end over the age-old and culturally fast deteriorating force of the Indus Valley.

Impact of the Indus Valley Civilisation

A civilisation may disintegrate but it does not completely die out. The Aryans who succeeded the Indus Valley people dominated

the scene and gave shape to a civilisation which is considered predominantly Aryan in its features. But there is hardly any reason to believe that the newcomers supplanted every old relic of the earlier times and built *de novo*. Scholars have drawn attention to the continuity of historical traditions recorded in the Puranas, right from the Mohenjodaro era to the great war of *Kurukshetra*. What is more important still, they have detected in the later Indian civilisation dominated by the Aryans traces of its pre-Aryan counterpart. For instance, 'Punch-marked coins, with their symbols, reminiscent of the Indus Valley script, and with their standard of weight conforming to the weight system at Mohenjodaro', it has been claimed, 'constitute an important survival of the Indus Valley dating from before 400 B.C.' The motifs and designs of Harappan pottery also survived till much later times, as archaeological finds in the Punjab and the north-west suggest. Even religious symbols of the later Aryan times may be traced back to pre-Aryan Harappan sources. For instance, the striking horned God depicted on the Harappa seals has been accepted as Proto-Siva on grounds of similarity with Siva Pashupati worshipped in post-Indus Valley ages. Similarly it has been supposed that 'the images of Siva as Dakshina-Murti and of Buddha as Yogi are due to the influence of the Indus culture'. The cult of the phallic worship and reverence to animals, particularly to the bull, may also be cited as further examples of Indus Valley survivals into later times. A complete breach with the Indus culture is thus negatived by the evidence of historical finds.

The Aryans in India

The importance of the Aryans in Indian history and culture so widely acclaimed has sometimes been over-emphasised. At one time, not many years ago, it was generally believed that the history of Indian civilisation began with the Aryans in India. The archaeological discoveries of the Indus Valley sites have proved the untenability of this view; the consensus of opinion today accepts the existence of a rich and mature civilisation in India even in the days when the Aryans were not thought of in India. Nevertheless, the importance of the Aryans in the history and culture of the Indian people is obvious. They gave shape and stability to the civilisation whose stream flows with unbroken continuity even to this day. With the Aryans we leave behind prehistory and cross the threshold of history

proper. Besides they provide us with the earliest specimens of Indian literature—*the Vedas*.

The word 'Aryan' has been much misused. Strictly speaking, it is a linguistic term connoting a speech-group of Indo-European origin. But in practice the word is erroneously used to denote an ethnic group. The inaccuracy has become so much a part of our habits that we cannot possibly get rid of it.

Original Home and Arrival in India

There are passages in the Puranas which claim that the Aryans were autochthons of the land. But there is no corroborative evidence to support the claim. On the contrary, independent evidence points to the fact that they came from outside. Various places like the Black Sea coasts, Central and Western Germany, the region now comprised in Austria, Hungary-Bohemia, South Russia and Central Asia have been suggested as the common habitat of the ancestors of the branch of the Nordic people who arrived on the Indian scene. While living in the common habitat the Indo-European peoples, conveniently known as the *Wiros*, spoke the same language. But as they left their original home, due perhaps to pressure of population, change of climate or inadequacy of pasture lands, they started, in groups, an exodus in search of new environments. While some moved to the several countries of Europe, others took on an eastern course, and arrived in successive waves in Persia and India. In the new lands they settled, they adapted their language to that of the people around them, retaining, however, words which are even today common to all the new languages they had adopted.

The arrival of the Aryans on the Indian scene was not the outcome of a single, concerted movement. It was more in the nature of a national migration in successive waves, spread over a fairly long period. The story of the conflict between the earlier inhabitants, described by the generic term of 'Dasas' or 'Dashyus', and the new-comers as well as of the progress of Aryan migration and settlement in India is given in the Vedic texts.

The determination of the first arrival of the Aryans in India, in terms of chronology, is possible only if we can determine the date of the *Rik* which is the earliest Vedic literature. This again is a matter on which diverse opinions have been expressed giving dates ranging between the sixth and the second millennium B.C. The general opinion today is, however, inclined to accept the second millennium

B.C., or to be more precise, the years between 1500 and 1200 B.C. as the probable period which saw the Aryans on the Indian soil. A more precise date is impossible because of the arrival of these people in succeeding waves spread over a long span of time, and further, on account of lack of positive evidence, epigraphic or otherwise, illustrating the stages of their advent in India. The only epigraphic record of some relevance on the subject is the one discovered at Boghaz Koi (Asia Minor), dated fourteenth century B.C. It contains, among other matters, references to kings who bore distinctly Indian names and to Aryan divinities—Indra, Mitra, Varuna and the Nasatyas. From the evidence of this record it follows that the Aryans in India and their contemporaries in Asia Minor had already established close cultural contacts with each other in the fourteenth century B.C.

Stages of Aryan Migration and Settlement: The vast mass of Vedic literature provides us with a glimpse into the progress of Aryan migration and settlement in India. A connected account of their arrival in India and earlier movements in this country is, however, lacking. From the stray evidence recorded in the Vedas, it would appear that like many other preceding and succeeding foreign immigrants they entered India through the north-western gaps. From the mention of rivers like the *Kubha* (Kabul), the *Suvastu* (Swat), the *Krumu* (Kurram) and the *Gomati* (Gomal) it is evident that their first contact was with regions of Afghanistan and North-Western India. The next stage of their migration brought them into the vast stretch of land watered by the *Sindhu* (Indus), and its five tributaries—the *Vitasta* (Jhelum), *Asikini* (Chenab), *Parusni* (Ravi), *Vipasa* (Beas) and *Satudri* (Sutlej). The whole area from the border of Afghanistan to that of the Punjab, populated by them, they called the *Sapta-Sindhu* or land of the seven rivers. Two other rivers mentioned in the celebrated *Nadi-Stuti* of the Rik Veda are those of *Marudvridha* and *Sushoma* respectively identified with Maruwadwan which flows through the Maru Valley in Kashmir-Jammu and the Sohan in the Rawalpindi district. Similarly the *Drisadvati* and the *Saraswati* (then a mighty river now lost in the deserts of Rajasthan) are mentioned, the latter in glowing terms. Many of the hymns were composed during the period when the Aryan settlements were confined to the *Panchanada* area. The manner in which the names of the *Ganga* (mentioned only in a later hymn) and *Jamuna* (being referred to only three times) are mentioned, suggests that the early Aryans,

settled in the Indus Valley, had heard no doubt the names of the two rivers but were yet to develop close contact with the areas watered by the Ganges and the Jumna.

It was at a comparatively later stage that the Aryans started moving farther east. As a result they gradually settled in the Ganges-Jumna Valley and became acquainted with the *Saraju*, which remained for long the limit of their eastward expansion.

The early Vedic literature mentions the *Himavat* but not the Vindhyas. The Aryans of the Rigvedic times also appear to have had contact with the seas. The geographical horizon of the Rigvedic Aryans may thus be said to have consisted of Afghanistan, North-West Frontier Province, Kashmir, the Punjab, parts of Sind, Rajasthan and Eastern India up to the river *Saraju*.

The later Vedic literature comprised in the Samhitas, Brahmanas, Upanishads and Sutras provides us with a much wider geographical background of the migrating activities of the Aryans. The *Satapatha Brahmana*, for example, testifies to the busy Aryan contact with the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

In the later Vedic literature rivers farther to the east find increasingly prominent mention. It appears from this that the centre of gravity had shifted from the Indus to *Madhyadesha* corresponding to the Ganges-Jumna Valley. Expansion to the east beyond the *Saraju* is similarly suggested by the mention of *Koshami* (Kosam on the Jumna), *Kasi*, *Videha* (North Bihar), *Magadha* (South Bihar) and *Anga* (South-East Bihar). Greater acquaintance with the Himalayan peaks and knowledge of the Vindhyas are also indicated in later Vedic literature. Thus the entire region between the Himalayas in the north and the Vindhyas in the south received the name of *Aryavartta* in recognition of the extension of Aryan predominance in this vast area during the post-Rigvedic period.

The Vedic Literature: Its Historicity

The Vedas (*Rik*, *Sama*, *Yayur*, *Artharva*—together with the Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads and Vedangas) constitute a huge mass of literature, composed over a fairly long span of time. For a period for which no coins, inscriptions or architectural remains are available, the importance of the Vedic literature as a source-material for the history of the Aryans in India cannot be over-estimated. But it has its limitations too. The Vedas are primarily religious texts and historical information

recorded therein are of an incidental and even casual nature. The Vedas being composed over a long period, the earliest Vedic literature is separated from the later Vedic works by thousands of years. They do not conform to any definite scheme of chronology and it is difficult to assign the occurrences or events narrated therein to any precise date or dates. Moreover, a long span of time intervenes between the composition of the Vedas and their subsequent commitment to writing. The written form in which these have come down to us is not necessarily the form in which these were composed. The composition underwent changes in course of subsequent ages when they assumed their written forms, and items not included in the original form found their way in later composition, or in some cases old items of information may have assumed new dimensions.

In spite of these limitations, the importance of the Vedas is self-evident. They mark the transition from prehistory to history. 'The Rigveda and the great body of oral religious literature which followed it in the first half of the first millennium B.C.', it has been observed, 'are part of the living Hindu tradition. The Vedic hymns are still recited at weddings and funerals, and in the daily devotion of the Brahman. Thus they are part of historical India, and do not belong to her buried historic past.' They are our primary, if not the only, source of information for the period of ancient Indian history marked by the end of the Indus Valley civilisation at one end and the rise of the Buddha at another.

Rigvedic India: The Rik provides us with a picture of life and thought in ancient India, a picture which is more interesting than complete. Being an essentially religious text, it is composed of 1,028 hymns dedicated to the gods worshipped by the Aryans. But underlying them there are materials which enable us to reconstruct the history of a period for which no archaeological or other source materials are available except perhaps the remains discovered in portions of the West Ganges Valley relative to what is called the Painted Grey Ware Culture, whose beginning may be traced to 1110 B.C. with a probable margin on the earlier side. A definite link between the Aryans and the Painted Grey Ware discovered at sites like Ahichhatra and Hastinapur is yet to be established. As Mortimer Wheeler suggests: 'If Aryans must be dragged into the picture, it is possible to suppose that the Painted Grey Ware may represent the second phase of their invasion of India when from the Punjab, they entered and Aryanised the Middle country of the Ganges-Jumna

doab, after picking up ideas and doubtless craftsmen in the Indus Valley and the Baluch borderland.' But he warns that 'It is best to admit that no proto-Aryan material culture has yet been identified in India.'

The Rigvedic Aryans, split up into a number of relative tribes, were not, strictly speaking, a homogeneous unit. The more well-known among the tribes were the *Anus*, *Druhyus*, *Yadus*, *Turvasus*, *Purus*, *Tristus*, *Srinjayas* and *Bharatas*. Rigvedic passages often refer to inter-tribal conflicts. In one such conflict *Sudas*, king of the Bharatas, won a signal victory over a confederacy of ten tribes and thus laid the foundation of the future greatness of the Bharatas. There is also evidence of conflict between the Rigvedic Aryans and their common enemies, described as *Panis* and *Dashyus*. The Panis, according to Aryan records, worshipped strange gods and were cattle-lifters. The contemptuous term 'Dashyu' was indiscriminately applied to earlier dwellers of the land, who were not necessarily inferior to the Aryans in culture. The conflict ended in the victory of the more vigorous Aryans and the 'Dashyus' were converted into 'Dasas'. It was only by slow degrees that the North-West and Panchanada area of India was subjugated by them.

Political Life: From the evidence of the Rigvedic texts it appears that monarchy was the prevalent form of government, although the concept of republics was not wholly unknown. The institution of monarchy probably owed its origin to military necessity and was sought to be justified on grounds of divine sanction. As a rule, kingship was hereditary, though there are instances when the king owed his position to the choice of the people. The primary duties of the king were to lead the army in battles, administer justice and maintain the priestly classes for the performance of sacrifices. The main income was derived from booties collected in war and voluntary gifts by the people. Compulsory taxation, in all probability, was not an item in state-finance. The *Senani*, the *Gramani* and the *Purohit* were important members of the royal entourage. While the former two looked after the army and served as the village headman respectively, the last-named occupied a distinctive office which was not concerned with religious matters alone but extended to rendering counsel to the king on all important matters.

Although some of the tribal kingdoms grew to be large, their number was few and the large majority of them were small in size.

A very striking feature of the Rigvedic polity was the institution

of two political units known as the *Samiti* and the *Sabha*. The importance of the *Samiti* will be evident from the fact that in early Vedic literature it is said to have derived from the same divine source as the king, viz. *Prajapati*. From the evidence of relevant passages in the Vedic texts it has been supposed that 'the king took particular care to be in the good grace of the assemblies and the loss of their favour and support was regarded as a dire calamity for him'. It is difficult to enumerate and distinguish the functions of the two organisations. It appears, however, that while the main business of the *Samiti* was discussion and ascertainment of general matters of policy, the functions of the *Sabha* seem to have been concerned more with the administration of justice than with political discussion.

Social Life: The family, called *Griha* or *Kula*, was the pivot of the Rigvedic society. As the semi-nomad Aryans settled in the North-West and the Punjab Valley they developed a healthy family life in which marriage was considered sacred and indissoluble. Monogamy was the normal practice though instances of polygamy were not unknown. Polyandry, known in later days, does not appear to have come in vogue in Rigvedic times. Child-marriage was unknown and the girls enjoyed considerable freedom in the choice of their consorts. The re-marriage of widows was permitted and ordinarily a widow was required to marry her dead husband's younger brother. Women occupied a distinctive place of honour in the social scale. They had practically unlimited authority in household affairs and freely took part in religious rituals including sacrifices. The scope of female education was by no means restricted. Several women like *Ghosha*, *Apala* and *Visvavara* are known to have acquired such a high level of education as enabled them to compose *mantras*. There is no evidence of the women living in a state of seclusion.

The society was composed of a number of tribes among whom inter-tribal conflicts were a feature of frequent occurrence. As the Aryans appeared on the Indian soil in groups, their number was not considerable. They found it expedient to absorb elements of races and peoples living in the country from earlier times, as well as other kindred tribes, in their fold so that a good deal of intermingling of races took place. This fluid state of society was a source of strength and weakness alike. While ultimately it added to the vigour of the Aryan communities, its immediate effect was to promote conflict between the old and the new elements. Traditions of such conflict are possibly reflected in the feud between Vasishtha and Visvamitra.

The society was patriarchal. The *pater familias* (Kulapa or Grihapati) stood at the head. His authority over his family as a whole was unquestioned. The story told in an early Vedic text of the father blinding his offending son illustrates the extent to which paternal authority was unfettered and absolute.

The costume worn in early Vedic times consisted of three parts —*nivi* or under-garment, *paridhana* or *vasa* (garment) and *adhivasa* (mantle). Besides cotton, wool and deer skin served as materials for clothing. In several cases the garments were embroidered with gold. Ornaments made of gold and precious jewels were in great demand and were worn by both men and women.

Food habits of the Rigvedic Aryans were simple—vegetable, fruits, meat and butter being the usual items of food. Fatted calf was often killed and served as food, though milk-giving cows were regarded as *Aghnya* (not to be slaughtered). Milk was a favourite drink and its use in the form of butter and curds is frequently mentioned. Stronger drinks, known as *soma* and *sura*, were popular. The former was used as a sacrificial drink; the latter, distilled from grain, though disapproved by the priestly poets, was a potent liquor.

It would be wrong to suppose that the Rigvedic Aryan was a stranger to fine arts. Life for him, in those days, had its joys and entertainments. Musical instruments like flute, lute and harp were in use. Songs were recited in rhythm to accompaniment of these instruments, besides cymbals and drums. Dancing too was encouraged and some passages in the Rigveda indicate the presence of a professional class of dancing girls. Among games and pastimes chariot race and dicing were popular. Gambling too prevailed. A poem in the Rigveda, called 'Gamester's Lament', describes the gambling propensities of the age.

It is not definitely known if the four-fold caste-division was a feature of the Rigvedic society. The *Purusha-Sukta* of the Rigveda (X, 90) is often cited as a proof of the existence of caste-divisions among the early Aryans. But the *Sukta* is held by many, with good reasons, to be spurious. Even if it was not so, it merely gives 'a highly figurative, imaginative theory of creation....It is absurd to treat the symbolical language of the poem as a narrative of supposed facts.' The only division, based on *Varna* or colour, was that between the white-skinned Aryans and the dark-skinned non-Aryans. It is possible to concede that with diversification of professions, divisions on the basis of occupations tended to emerge, but it would be wrong

to suppose that it had taken shape in the early days depicted in the Rigvedic literature. It is, however, certain that the priestly class had already won a distinctive, if not predominant, place in the social life of Rigvedic India.

Economic Life: The economic life of the Rigvedic Aryans, unlike that of the Indus Valley people, was distinctly rural. References to cities or even towns in the Rigvedic literature are conspicuously absent. The village with its pastoral and agricultural land formed the unit of the Rigvedic economic life. In this mixed pastoral and agricultural economy the cattle necessarily occupied a position of great importance. Values of commodities or lands were determined in terms of cattle, and Rigvedic passages are replete with wishful prayers for the increase of their number. Agriculture was the main occupation of the early Aryans after they had become settlers in India. There are references to ploughing of land and reaping of *java* (barley) and also to a crude system of irrigation. Hunting too was one of the approved, though subsidiary, means of livelihood. The Rigvedic age also saw the cultivation of industrial arts, to some extent. The bronze-smiths acquired a skill which was admitted as higher than that attained by their Indus Valley predecessors. Among other industrial artists were the carpenters, the chariot-makers, cabinet-makers, tanners, weavers, potters and metal workers. The use of iron was probably unknown till later times. The cow was the usual means of barter but there is evidence of the use of a gold coin, named *niska* (originally a sort of necklace-type ornament) which had begun to appear as a sort of rudimentary currency. Trade was mostly land-borne, but the possibility of trade through the medium of water-ways and even seas cannot be altogether excluded. The mention of the *Samudra* and 'ships' with hundred oars (*Sataritra*) occurring in the early Vedic texts is suggestive of sea-borne commerce.

Religious Life and Thought: The religion of the Rigveda was in the main a continuation of the primitive faiths prevalent among the Aryans before their arrival in India. As they settled on the Indian soil, they added to their pantheon local divinities of Indian origin. Most of their deities like *Dyaus* (sky), *Agni* (fire), *Parjanya* (clouds), *Surya* (Sun) were personified objects of nature. The deities worshipped by the Rigvedic Aryans were fairly numerous and they have been grouped under three convenient heads—*terrestrial* (like Prithvi, Agni, Soma, etc.), *celestial* (Dyaus, Varuna, Surya, etc.) and *atmospheric* (Indra, Vayu, Parjanya, etc.). There was as yet no defi-

nite hierarchy among the gods, for pre-eminence was accorded to different gods at different times; but on the whole Varuna and Indra were treated with special adoration. The predominance of the male-divinities over their female counterparts was another striking characteristic of the Rigvedic pantheon. To propitiate the divinities prayers and sacrifices were offered to the accompaniment of milk, grain and *ghee*. The offerings were prompted by the belief that 'the gods subdue the forces of evil and regulate the order of nature, which they themselves follow and enforce on mortals'. They reward the righteous and punish the sinful. The religious thought, as revealed in the Rigveda, is dominated by a strikingly practical bias. It was not concerned so much with metaphysical speculation as with the practical concern for a pleasant, cheerful and materially comfortable living. The dominant thought underlying the prayers alluded to in the Rigveda reveals the interest of the worshippers of the gods in the joys and pleasures of life and this is evidenced by their prayer for long, healthy life, wealth, heroic progeny and adequacy of food and drink.

The Later Vedic Age

Post-Rigvedic Literature: The Rig is the earliest of the vast mass of the Vedic literature. It was followed in course of centuries by massive literary texts comprised in successive works, known as the *Sama, Yayus* and *Atharava* Veda. The essential part in each Veda is its *Samhita* or a collection of metrical hymns, prayers and benedictions interspersed with occasional prose passages. The Rig Samhita consisting of 1,028 hymns is the oldest. This was followed by the Samhitas of the Sama, Yajus and Atharva Vedas in which some hymns, however, are to be found in common. Next to the *Samhitas* are the *Brahmanas*. These are theological texts written in prose, dwelling upon the value and efficiency of sacrificial rites and rituals. The more important among the *Brahmanas* are *Aitareya, Satapatha, Jaiminiya* and *Gopatha*. The *Aranyakas* constitute the concluding portion of the *Brahmanas*. They are so called as their mystical contents could profitably be studied only in the seclusion of the forest and were presumably intended for men on retirement from the din and bustle of worldly life. The *Upanishads* are yet another important constitutent of the later Vedic literature. They comprise profound instructions conveyed by the preceptors to their pupils, designed to acquaint them with the means for the attainment of

emancipation through *Jnana* or supreme knowledge. The number of extant *Upanishads* is 108, the more important among them being *Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Svestasvatara, Prasna, Mandukya* and *Kausitaki*. Some of them are 'parts of the Veda, best known to Hindu readers in modern days as being the foundation of the later and more systematic Vedanta philosophy'.

Later Vedic Age: A vast span of time, to be calculated in terms of centuries, separates the Rik or the earliest Veda from the later Vedic texts with all their accessories—the *Vedantas* and *Vedangas*. In the circumstances it is only to be expected that civilisation, by nature a continuous growth, could not and did not remain static. In course of centuries it underwent changes and modifications so that life and society as revealed in the later Vedic sources are in many respects different from those depicted in the Rik.

Geographical Background: The geographical background of the later Vedic age is much wider than that revealed in the Rigveda. The Aryans in the post-Rigvedic age seem to have shifted their centre of activities from the Indus Valley to that of the Ganges-Jumna. The original seat of Aryan settlement in India, namely the North-West, receives scant attention in the later Vedas, and gradually sinks into comparative unimportance to such an extent that the tribes still dwelling in these regions, like the Gandharis and the Balhikas, are spoken of rather disparagingly. Madhyadesha gradually usurped the place of the North-West and *Kurukshetra*, situated in the country of the Kuru-Panchalas, came to enjoy the pride of place. An acquaintance with the region lying farther east and comprised in Kosala, Kasi, Videha, Magadha and Anga is also indicated though this area was yet to experience the full impact of Aryan advent. Some knowledge of the people inhabiting farther south is also suggested by the mention of such tribes as *Satvants, Vidarbhas, Nishadas* and *Kuntis*. The Vindhyas for the first time find mention in one of the Upanishads—the Kausitaki Upanishad. References in the Satapatha Brahmana illustrate the acquaintance of the Aryans of the later Vedic age with both the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

In summing up the progress of Aryan migration in the post-Rigvedic period it has been observed: 'the period of the later Samhitas, Brahmanas, Upanishads and Sutras is characterised by a spirit of adventure and expansion and the advancing Aryans were spreading in every direction, colonising the east, south and north.

...The territory comprised within the sphere of Aryan influence down to the period of the Upanishads may be roughly described as the whole of India to the north of the Narmada, and some regions even to the south of that river.'

Changes in the Fortunes of the Tribes: The expansion of Aryan settlement beyond the North-West and the Indus Valley witnessed striking changes in the fortunes of the tribes in which the early Aryans were divided. In the Rigvedic age the *Bharatas* were regarded as the leading tribe. Their king Sudas was credited with victories against the fellow-Aryans as well as the non-Aryans. Their supremacy is well attested by the fact that the country came to be known as *Bharatavarsha* after them. Next to the Bharatas in power and resources stood the *Purus*, *Anus*, *Druhyus*, *Yadus* and *Turvasus*. But in the later Vedic age the position and status of these tribes underwent a change. The Bharatas lost their primacy to the *Kurus* whose rise into leadership was largely facilitated by their alliance with the *Panchalas*. In post-Rigvedic literature the kings and priests of the Kuru-Panchalas are described as the models of what kings and priests should be. Some of the tribes like *Vasus* and *Usinaras* who lived in isolation from each other in the age of the Rigveda had in the later Vedic age merged themselves into bigger tribal units.

The primacy of the Kuru-Panchalas did not, however, remain unchallenged for long. *Videha* (North Bihar) with its capital in Mithila emerged as a powerful kingdom. One of its early rulers, Janaka, is celebrated in ancient literature as the embodiment of knowledge and state-craft. Among other important seats of political power were *Kosala* in the east, *Gandhara* in the north-west and *Kekaya* and *Madra* in the western sector.

Emergence of Larger Political and Administrative Units: The fusion of tribes and the extension of authority over increasingly wider areas made possible the emergence of bigger kingdoms than those existing before. The growth of bigger kingdoms was either accompanied with or immediately followed by the concept of paramount authority, like that of the *Chakravarti Rajan*. Simultaneously rituals connected with royalty became increasingly elaborate. The kings of the later Vedic age are known to have performed the *Vajapeya*, *Aswamedha* and *Rajasuya* sacrifices as a mark of the paramountcy. The term *Rajan* used in Rigvedic literature to denote a king in later Vedic times was applied to a ruler of ordinary rank; ambitious and powerful kings began to assume new titles like *Adhiraja*,

Rajadhiraja, *Samrat* and *Ekarat* by way of emphasising their improved status and enhanced authority. There is even a persistent tendency in later Vedic literature to claim for kingship the sanction of divinity.

As a corollary to the concept of exalted monarchy the royal entourage also expanded. To the old Rigvedic offices of the *Senani*, *Gramani* and *Purohita* were added those of the *Mahishi* (the chief Queen), *Rajanya* (nobles), *Kshattri* (chamberlain), *Samgrahitri* (treasurer), *Bhagaduta* (collector of taxes), *Suta* (charioteer), *Akshavapa* (superintendent of dicing) and *Sthapati* (chief judge).

With the elaboration of officialdom the popular assemblies, the *Sabha* and the *Samiti*, tended to lose their importance, though they continued, in theory at least, to be invested with the same status as was ascribed to them in earlier times. That the element of popular control over the working of the government, on the whole, including kingly power, was not substantially decreased is proved by the fact of expulsion of wicked rulers by the people and the installation of new kings by the will of the people recorded in later literature.

Social Life: Social life of the later Vedic age had undergone changes since the days of the Rigveda. In the days to which the Rigveda refers, division of the people into four-fold castes was either unknown or partly effected. But the evidence recorded in the post-Rigvedic literature reveals that the caste was well on its way to become well-defined, though not rigid, divisions. The rise of hereditary occupational groups was facilitated, in a large degree, by the opening out of new prospects of occupation, the need for specialised and skilled labour and for more attention to cultivation of the art of warfare in an expanding state. The two upper classes, viz. the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas, enjoyed precedence over the Vaishyas and Sudras. The predominance of the Brahmanas seems to have been well conceded and in several passages of the *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas* they have been described as even superior to the king. The Sudras occupied the lowest position in the society and were subjected to numerous disabilities. According to a passage in the *Aitareya Brahmana* the Sudra was but 'the servant of another, to be expelled at will and to be slain at will'. Even then there is no indication that the caste had become a rigid system and instances of movement from one caste assignment to another was by no means rare.

Marriage, as in the age of the Rigveda, was solemnised only

after girls had attained the age of puberty. The usual practice was to marry outside the *gotra*, though exceptions are not unknown. Polygamy prevailed and in a lesser degree polyandry. Conjugal morality, on the whole, was of a high order. Remarriage of widows, as in the past, was permitted. But the position of the women had deteriorated compared with that enjoyed by them in the Rigvedic times. They were debarred from participation in the Assembly. The *Aitareya Brahmana* defines a good woman as one who does not talk back. Several passages in the *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas* deplore the birth of daughters and pray for male progeny. But it would be a mistake to suppose that the new restrictions imposed on the women-folk disqualified them in practice, if they so desired, from educational pursuits. Gargi and Maitreyi, for instance, upheld the traditions of Ghosa, Apala and Visvavara of the Rigvedic age and distinguished themselves by their attainments in the sphere of advanced learning.

Food and Dress: To barley, rice was added as an item of principal food. The *Satapatha Brahmana* distinctly mentions the practice of cooking rice with milk and beans. Meat continued to be in demand as in earlier days, specially on ceremonious occasions. Vegetables and fruits were regular items of food. The use of various preparations of milk was also known. The two drinks of the Rigvedic age, the *Soma* and *Sura*, continued to be in use in the post-Vedic age.

The dress of the later Vedic age as worn by both men and women was not merely made of cotton, wool and skin of animals as before, but also of silk and probably goat's hair. Dyed and embroidered clothes were in great demand. As in older times ornaments made of gold and precious jewels were worn by people, irrespective of sexes. There is definite evidence of the use of shoes and sandals made of boar-skin. In the later Vedic age Salali (comb), Sankha (conch-shell) and Prakasha (metal mirror) came in extensive use for the first time.

Economic Life: The economic life of the later Vedic age marks a distinct advance on that of the Rigvedic period. The number of occupations had increased due to the appearance of new trades and crafts. To the weavers, jewellers and potters were now added basket-makers, rope-makers, cooks, washermen and dyers. Astrologers were in demand and so too the physicians, though in a lesser degree. From the internal evidence of the later Vedic texts it has been supposed that 'various types of domestic servants are men-

tioned, and rudimentary entertainment industry existed, with professional acrobats, fortune-tellers, flute players and dancers, while there are also references to usurers and merchants.'

Agriculture also showed considerable progress. The size and quality of the plough had improved and some ploughs, actually in use, were so heavy that these were drawn by as many as 24 oxen. The art of manuring appears to have been well-practised. In the age under review greater skill was displayed in the use of metals. Besides gold, silver, copper and bronze, new metals like lead (*sisa*), tin (*trapu*) and iron (*ayas*) had come into use. Regular coinage was yet to be introduced, but a beginning of the same is indicated by the use of *Satamana*, a piece of gold equivalent in weight to 100 *Krishnalas* or berries of gunja. The *niska* of earlier times also continued to be in circulation. Evidences of expanded commerce, both inland and foreign, are incidentally borne in the texts of the *Brahmanas* and *Samhitas*. There seems to be evidence of commercial contact between India of later Vedic times and contemporary Mesopotamia.

Religious Life and Thought: The religious life of the post-Rigvedic age shows a tendency towards elaborate rituals, consequently necessitating the employment of a larger priestly class. It consisted of four groups, viz. the *Hotri* (invoker), the *Udgatri* (chanter), the *Adhvaryu* (reformer) and *Brahmana* (higher priest). The old Vedic faith lost its pristine simplicity. Religion gradually assumed a stereotyped form. The ceremonials became increasingly elaborate and mechanical. The sacrifices were imparted mystic significance and invested with greater efficacy; it was believed that they were even more powerful than the gods. As a result, on the one hand, the importance of the priests who alone, they claimed, could conduct and interpret them, steadily increased, and on the other, some of the minor Rigvedic gods either lost their importance or disappeared. The leading position in the hierarchy of divinities was now assigned to *Rudra* whose epithet was Siva and who ranked immediately next to *Vishnu*. In popular conception the *Gandharvas*, *Apsaras* and *Nagas* were invested with attributes of near-divinity.

Apart from excessive rituals the other distinctive feature of the religious life in the post-Rigvedic age was the emphasis, stressed in the *Aranyakas*, on meditation without the intermediary of priestly classes and internal or mental sacrifice. The philosophical outlook underlying the Upanishads was of an exceptionally high and

rational order. It preached the doctrine of the *Brahman* as the one Ultimate Reality and the need of absorbing the individual self or *atman* in the all-embracing *Brahman*. The concise phrase, *tat tvam asi*, occurring in the Upanishads may be said to sum up their essential message. The way to this supreme realisation lay through the attainment of *Jnana* or supreme knowledge.

Vedic Civilisation: Its Relation with the Civilisation of the Indus Valley

The relationship between the two well-known civilisations of ancient India has been a matter of learned but inconclusive discussion among the scholars of history. In general, the opinion today is inclined to the view that 'the Indus Valley civilisation is different from and anterior to the culture of the Vedic period'.

The sources of information available so far, in respect of both these cultures, are incomplete and precise conclusions are difficult to arrive at. Within these limitations, the differences between the two are apparent enough. The archaeological remains, which are our only source of information regarding the Indus Valley civilisation, suggest that it was predominantly, if not exclusively, an urban civilisation, flourshing in and around well-developed cities possessing nearly all the amenities of a municipal life. The Vedic literature, which is our only source-material, so far, for the reconstruction of the Vedic culture, on the other hand, reveals that it was exclusively rural in character; in fact there is no reference in the entire mass of Vedic literature to cities or even towns. The people living in the Vedic period knew the use of iron (*ayas*) but no evidence of the use of this metal in the Indus Valley has so far been discovered. Similarly, the absence of any kind of defensive weapons in the remains of Mohenjodaro and Harappa has lent support to the theory that the Indus Valley people were unacquainted with defensive implements like shields and helmets which the Vedic Aryans were accustomed to using in their warfare. The Aryans, again, made extensive use of the horse both for domestic and military purpose, but the complete absence of the figure of horse on the Indus seals or its skeletal remains among the archaeological finds discovered so far, has led scholars to doubt the existence of the animal in the Indus Valley. Lastly, the Indus Valley people knew the art of writing though the script is yet to be deciphered. The Aryans, however, did not become acquainted with this art till at a much later date.

In regard to religions, cults and beliefs there are striking differences between the two streams of culture. The worship of images and of the phallus, fairly prevalent in the Indus Valley, was unknown to the Vedic Aryans. The Mother Goddess and Proto-Siva(?) were objects of worship in the age of the Harappan culture but they had no place in the Vedic pantheon. The Harappan people reserved their veneration for the humped bull while the Aryans venerated the cow.

The question as to which of these two civilisations was older is more difficult to answer. This is due to the fact that neither of them can be assigned to any precise or well-marked chronological system. No clue to date is available from the archaeological remains of the Indus Valley any more than from the literary evidences recorded in the Vedic literature. In the circumstances, any conclusion is at best conjectural. At the present stage of our knowledge based mainly on geological examination of the layers as well as on the basis of similarities detected between some Indus and Mesopotamian relics, it has been supposed that the Indus Valley civilisation belongs to the period *c.* 3000–1500 B.C. On the other hand, the arrival of the Aryans in India (provided they were not autochthons of the land) is generally assigned to the second millennium B.C. (though opinion is by no means unanimous, some scholars pushing it back as early as the sixth millennium B.C.). As such, pending the discovery of evidence of a conclusive nature at a future date, it is reasonable to suppose that the Indus Valley civilisation was anterior to the culture of the Vedic period and that in their origin they were two different streams, though, later on, a good deal of intermingling took place, moulding the contour and character of the historical civilisation of India of later times.

The Epics, Puranas and Dharmasastras

The Epic Age in India: The history of ancient India, like that of ancient Hellas, is generally supposed to have had its Epic or the Heroic Age. This age is further supposed to have been synchronous with the period intervening between the post-Rigvedic age and the age of the Buddha. The term 'Epic Age' has the sanction of customary use no doubt; but it is hardly proper or historical. The two epics of ancient India are examples of excellent literature in verse. But, for historical purposes, they are of far less value. This is because it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify, with any degree

of precision, the period of time to which they actually refer. As a recent writer observes: 'These are so overlaid by the accretions of later centuries that no attempt at interpreting them historically has so far won general acceptance, and it may never be possible to sift the fact from the fiction. Even the social conditions described in the epics, the stories of which may have been composed in a primitive form at this time, mainly refer not to this age, but to the obscure period between the Mauryan and Guptan empires. Attempts of some earlier authorities to create an "Epic Age" in the history of India, as distinct from the age of the later Vedas, are quite unconvincing.' In the circumstances, the so-called Epic Age should be more correctly regarded as a continuation of the later Vedic age rather than as a distinct or separate age.

It is further to be noted that our knowledge regarding this last phase of the later Vedic period culminating in the age of the Buddha is derived mainly, though not exclusively, from literary sources. Recently Indian archaeologists have unearthed from the ancient site of Hastinapura, alluded to in the *Mahabharata*, a few interesting specimens of remains. These consist of painted grey pottery, copper implements and remains of houses made of sun-baked bricks. However inadequate these sources are, they are specially valuable in that, unlike literary sources, the archaeological remains admit of more dependable chronology. The Hastinapura relics, on an examination of the layer of earth to which they belong, have been assigned to a period varying between 1000 and 700 B.C.

The Epics: The epics are supposed to have had their origin in *Gathas* and *Narasamsis* sung in celebration of great men and events on ceremonious occasions. Some of the episodes extolled in the gathas acquired, in course of ages, a great deal of popularity and were chosen as themes for *Itihasa* and *Kavya*. The *Mahabharata*, for example, is a combination of both these categories. A number of heroes like Janamejaya and Parikshita eulogised in this epic were thus known to the *Brahmanas* of earlier times. The name of Valmiki, the reputed author of the *Ramayana*, similarly seems to occur in the Buddhist and Jain writings of the first millennium A.D. It is, however, to be understood that it took a fairly long time for the two epics to assume the form in which they have come down to our times and that they cannot be assigned to any single author or even to authors belonging to one generation. 'Both the poems', it has been said, 'contain a good deal of pseudo-epic or didactic mate-

rial which came to be included at a comparatively late date.' It is impossible to fix any dates for the composition of the two epics, but the consensus among historians is that the *Mahabharata* in the form in which it has come down to us 'is probably not older than the fourth century B.C. and not later than the fourth century A.D.' Similarly, it has been supposed that the *Ramayana* assumed its present form over a long period intervening between the third century B.C. and the second century A.D.

Importance of the Epics: In spite of the large-scale interpolations which have crept into the epics over a long stretch of time, the intermingling of mythological fiction so freely indulged in, specially in the *Ramayana*, and the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of fitting them into a dependable chronological pattern, the basic importance of the two epics, in a study of ancient Indian history, cannot be denied. Both the epics illustrate historic movements and facts of great significance. While the main theme of the *Ramayana* is the expansion of Aryan culture over the Deccan* and South India, the kernel of the *Mahabharata* is in the story of a great war waged between two rival power-blocs contending for political supremacy in Aryavarta.

Notwithstanding the obvious limitations of the epics as source-materials for a given period, they may be said to indicate some broad features relating to the social and cultural life of ancient India.

They reveal the predominance of the Kshatriyas in the society and polity, won largely at the expense of the priestly classes. 'Both the poems', it has been said, 'describe much the same state of society; but the proposition is subject to the qualification that certain parts of the *Mahabharata* retain distinct traces of early practices, such as cow-killing and human sacrifices, which were regarded with horror when the later parts of the work were composed.' Other features are clearly non-Aryan, notably the polyandry of the Pandavas. Caste, it seems, had already struck deep roots and the downgrading of the Sudras was complete. The women too had ceased to enjoy

*An ingenious suggestion recently offered is that 'the conflict between Rama and Ravana is a description of local conflicts between the agriculturists of the Ganges valley and the more primitive hunting and food gathering societies of the Vindhyan region. The transference of these events in a more southerly location and the reference to Ceylon may have been the work of an editor of a later period.' R. Thapar, *A History of India*, Pelican Edn., p. 33.

the status and rights they were entitled to in the early Vedic age. In the domain of religious cult the most remarkable phenomenon was the replacement of the Vedic deities by the Hindu Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, attended with a large number of minor divinities. The epic age may thus be said to have laid the secure foundations of modern Hinduism.

The Puranas: Literally meaning 'ancient stories', the Puranas are a mass collection of legends and religious instructions. They are 18 in number with as many *upa-puranas*. Like the Epics, the Puranas underwent drastic modifications in course of succeeding centuries since the days of their original composition. 'Each Purana, originally a dynastic list and a religious manual', it has been supposed, 'has become an elaborate treatise for the glorification of the new Indo-Aryan gods, Vishnu and Siva.' The more important part of the Puranic literature relates to the genealogical tables of kings and compilation of ancient historical tradition recorded therein. As historical materials their importance is reduced by the fact that, in their present form, they are not very ancient, certainly not older than the Gupta age.

The Dharmasashtras: The Dharmasashtras are primarily treatises on Dharma or civil and religious law. Their dates cannot be determined even with an approximation to precision; but their importance is derived from the fact that they are our main sources of knowledge regarding ancient Brahmanical institutions and civilisation. The more well-known Dharmasashtras are the *Samhitas* ascribed to Manu, Vishnu, Yajnavalka and Narada.

They reveal the working of the caste system in a rigid form, each division being required to perform its allotted duties strictly in accordance with the rites prescribed in the Sashtras. In addition to the original four-fold division, the Dharmasashtras also refer to 'mixed castes' who owed their origin to intermarriages and unauthorised relationships. Mention is also made of people like the *Mlechchas* and *Chandalas* who were considered even inferior to the Sudras.

The Dharmasashtras also speak of the four *Ashramas* or stages of life prescribed for the *Dvija* or the twice-born. The first stage, known as the *Brahmacharya* or the period of studentship, began with the ceremony of *upanayana* and ended with the completion of education. The second stage, viz. that of *Garhasthya*, permitted marriage and enjoined household duties. In the third stage, known as the *Vanaprastha*, the Ashramite renounced worldly life, retired

to the seclusion of a forest and spent his days in meditation. The fourth and the last stage, known as *Sannyasa*, was characterised by complete severance of worldly ties and mortification of the body willingly undertaken with a view to realising the ultimate Truth. It is not known for certain to what extent this norm of life was adhered to in practice by those for whom these were made obligatory by the Sashtric injunctions.

The degradation of the position of women already indicated in the epic literature went on unchecked in the age of the Dharmasashtras. Unlike in former days, child-marriage had come to prevail and remarriage of widows was prohibited. Women were not allowed to inherit property. The degraded position of the women is well reflected in the oft-quoted passage of Manu—'A woman does not deserve independence, she is protected by the father in childhood, by her husband in youth, and by her sons in old age.'

CHAPTER THREE

THE AGE OF THE BUDDHA

THE history of India during the centuries we have traversed so far may be compared to 'a jigsaw puzzle with many missing pieces'. A continuous narrative history has not been possible, and we had to remain content with knowing more of culture and religion and less of polity and material attainment. This has given rise to the widespread fallacy that moral or spiritual elevation rather than material advancement was the *sine qua non* of ancient Indian civilisation.

But a distinct improvement is noticed as we step into the sixth century B.C., usually designated as the age of the Buddha. It saw new stirrings in religious life, marked by the rise of unorthodox sects like the Ajivikas, Jains and Buddhists. This, by itself, invested the period with a remarkable importance of its own. But the importance was not confined to the sphere of religion and philosophy alone; it extended to the realm of politics and economics as well. We have in this period the first glimpse of a definite bid towards an all-embracing Indian empire. In assessing the importance of this age it has been rightly observed: 'It is in the sixth century B.C. that Indian history emerges from legend and dubious tradition. Now for the first time we read of great kings whose historicity is certain, and some of whose achievements are known, and from now on the main lines of India's development are clear.' The period also witnessed new economic forces at work, invigorated through rapidly expanding commerce, increase in the number of artisan-population, organisation of *Srenis* or guilds and the rise of new urban centres. The sixth century B.C. was thus destined to leave its impress as a meaningful epoch in Indian history.

Rise of Unorthodox Religious Thinking

One of the most remarkable features of the sixth century B.C. was new stirrings in the religious life of India. Its ground had been slowly prepared by the ascetics and wandering sophists of the earlier ages, many of whom had expressed open disavowal of the ritual-oriented religion and belief in the pantheon of numerous divinities, emphasised in several post-Rigvedic religious texts, and resented alike the domination of the priestly classes and the rigidity of the caste divisions. The impact of the rapidly growing urban centres

also prepared the ground for bold and unorthodox thinking. It is more than casual that nearly all the leaders of the unorthdox sects came from non-brahmanical ranks.

It is in the background of these preparatory activities that the rise of the new schools of religious thought are to be treated and studied.

Ajivikas: The earliest among the new schools of religion were the Ajivikas. The most well-known exponent of the Ajivika doctrines was *Gosala Mankhaliputta*, a contemporary of Mahavira Vardhamana, though their origin is ascribed to a much earlier antiquity. No literature of the Ajivikas has come down to us, but from references to them in Jain and Buddhist works, it is possible to suggest that the two most striking characteristics of the sect were their adherence to asceticism and a strongly rooted belief in pre-determinism. In their view an impersonal and inexorable cosmic principle, known as *Niyati*, determined the course of the universe and of the world, animate and inanimate, dwelling therein.

In the beginning the Ajivikas had their chief centres of activities in the region between Avanti in the west and Anga in the east. In later days they found patrons in Maurya rulers like Asoka and his grandson, Dasaratha. They are referred to in still later times as is evidenced by the *Milindapanha* composed in the first century A.D. It is possible that the Ajivikas lingered on as late as the seventh century A.D., for Banabhatta in his *Harsha-Charita* distinctly refers to the sect. But it is evident that the faith had appreciably lost its former appeal. It has been supposed that 'their extreme asceticism, love of solitude, disdain of comfort and even of decencies, and love of austerities of all kinds repelled all but an infinitesimal minority and so naturally the sect lost popularity in course of time.' To these may be added rivalry with the contemporary schools of the Jains and the Buddhists on the one hand, and the assimilative attributes of Hinduism on the other. In the fourteenth century the sect was probably merged into the reinvigorated cult of Vaishnavism.

The Jains: The Jains were destined to leave a wider and more lasting impress on the religion and culture of India than the Ajivikas. According to traditional account, the doctrines embodied in Jainisim were preached by twenty-four *tirthankaras* or saints. With the exception of the last two, Parsva and Mahavira, the remaining twenty-two were all mythical figures. Even the outlines of the life of Parsva who flourished 250 years before Mahavira are not known

with any degree of precision. More, however, is known of his main teachings. These emphasised the importance of cultivating the four-fold virtues of truthfulness, non-injury, non-possession of property and non-receipt of anything except when it is freely given.

The greatest exponent of Jainism was Mahavira Vardhamana, a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. The traditional accounts of his life reveal a striking resemblance with those of the founder of the Buddhist faith. Like Gautama, Mahavira was the scion of a Kshatriya family, who renounced the world at a comparatively young age, wandered over extensive areas and practised penance till he attained 'deliverance from the bonds of pleasure and pain' and came to be known as *Jina* (the conqueror) or *Nigrantha* (the one without any bond). For about thirty years following his attainment of this state of 'freedom from bondage' Mahavira kept himself actively engaged in the propagation of his doctrines till his death at the age of 72 at Pawa in *c.* 478 B.C. The great contrast between Mahavira and Buddha lies in the fact that while the latter founded a religion which was not preached before, Mahavira was more a reformer than an innovator. He accepted the doctrines propagated by Parsva, adding to them an emphasis on the virtue of *Brahmacharya* or chastity and the need of renouncing everything including clothes.

Mahavira's teachings were for many years confined to the regions of Kosala, Videha, Magadha and Anga till they found acceptance among people dwelling in extensive areas of western India, Rajasthan and portions of the Deccan. Like Buddhism the Jain faith had its royal adherents. According to traditional accounts, Magadhan kings like Srenika and Ajatasatru were among its patrons.

Jainism: *Its Teachings*: Jain teachings were at first propagated orally. In the third century B.C. they were collected and committed to writing. According to Jain doctrines the universe is eternal and all things in the universe—men, animals, plants, air, fire, wind, etc.—have a soul (jiva), endowed with various degrees of consciousness. The great purpose of life is purification of the soul, which can be attained through penance, extinction of desire, disciplined conduct and renunciation—and not through knowledge as enunciated in the Upanishads. In Jain conception full salvation can be attained only by one who has renounced the world for a monk's life.

The Jains did not believe in a supreme Deity as the creator of the universe. But they did not deny the existence of God. God, in

their view, was to be identified with 'only the highest, the noblest and the fullest manifestation of all the powers which lie latent in the soul of man'. Their belief in the existence of Soul or *Jiva* in every object, animate as well as inanimate, led them to practise *ahimsa* or non-injury to the living in a degree that went much beyond the limits observed by the Buddhists.

According to Jain conception, full salvation is not attainable by lay worshippers. For attaining the supreme and ultimate state it is necessary that one must abandon all bonds, trammels and worldly things including clothes, observing fasting and mortification and the strict discipline of a monastic life.

According to traditional accounts the original doctrines propagated by Mahavira were embodied in the texts known as *Purvas*. But these have not survived. Towards the close of the fourth century B.C. an attempt was made to revive the knowledge of the sacred texts. This resulted in the compilation of twelve *Angas*. Nearly a thousand years later all the extant texts of Jain literature including the twelve Angas were collated and brought together. But this did not help to retain unity in the ranks of the Jains who had split into two distinct sects. The strict followers of Mahavira were the *Digambaras*; their opponents who claimed themselves to have been the followers of Jainism as originally preached in the days before Mahavira became known as the *Svetamvaras*. It is not possible to determine precisely the date of the schism, but it would appear from available evidence that the split manifested itself as early as the first century A.D.

Jainism did not spread in India as widely as Buddhism. Nor did it spread like the latter in countries beyond India. But it is a striking fact that while Buddhism is not counted today as a major religion in the land of its birth, Jainism continues to flourish to this day as one of India's popular religions. This survival of Jainism is ascribed to the fact that the Jain religious teachers paid more attention to the lay worshippers than the Buddhists and that the domestic rites of the Jains such as those concerned with birth, marriage and death conformed to the Hindu practices more than those of the Buddhists.

The Buddhists: Among the so-called unorthodox sects none had won greater popularity and wider acceptance than Buddhism. Unlike the Ajivikas and the Jains, the Buddhists did not claim an earlier antiquity for their religion beyond the life of the Buddha.

The life-story of the founder of Buddhism is inadequately known. Isolated incidents of his life are recorded in Pali in the introduction to the *Jatakas*, chronicles of Ceylon and later Sanskrit works like *Lalitavistara*. He was born in a Kshatriya family belonging to the *Sakya* clan of Kapilavastu. His father, Suddhodana, was one of the elected ruling chiefs of the small state of Kapilavastu, situated near the Himalayas, north of the far-famed kingdom of Kosala. Like his contemporary Mahavira Vardhamana, he renounced the world in search of truth and knowledge, undertook extensive tours, engaged himself in austere penance and meditation and, after six years of sustained efforts, attained Enlightenment. He was since then known as the *Buddha* or the Enlightened One. He devoted himself for the rest of his life, covering a period of 45 years, to the propagation of his message. His first sermon was preached at the Deer Park at Sarnath before his first five disciples.

In course of time the number of disciples went on increasing and a large number of men and women in north-eastern parts of India joined the ranks of the Buddhists. Still, when he died at the age of 80 years at Kushinagar (modern Kasia in the Gorakhpur district, U.P.) in *c.* 486 B.C., the religion still had a predominantly local sectarian character.

In succeeding years, specially after the great Maurya Emperor Asoka championed it, Buddhism, like Christianity after Emperor Constantine championed it, began to spread over rapidly expanding areas. As a result of the missionary efforts initiated by the great Maurya Emperor the religion of the Buddha came to prevail over the whole of India and even spread beyond India to various countries in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. From a local religious sect, it grew, in course of centuries, to be a world religion. In the post-Mauryan period it found royal champions in the great Kushan monarch Kaniska, among Indo-Greek rulers, the later Guptas and lastly, the Palas of Eastern India.

Buddhism: *Its Teachings*: No contemporary records of Buddha's teachings are available. But from those recorded in the later Buddhist texts it appears that his teachings were remarkably simple and practical. The wanderings and penance he had undertaken were prompted by the desire to find a way out of the miseries of life and salvation from the inexorable operation of the wheel of *Karma*. He claimed to have discovered the Four Noble Truths (*Arya Satya*). The first relates to the truth of pain: 'Birth is pain, old age

is pain, sickness is pain, death is pain.' The second concerns the truth of the cause of pain and this is the *tanha* or craving that leads to rebirth. The third is: 'the noble birth of the cessation of pain, consisting in the remainderless cessation of craving, its abandonment and rejection, emancipation, and freedom from support'. The fourth truth consists in the actual means of arriving at these truths through extinction of *tanha* or desire. For attaining this state of freedom from desire neither extreme penance nor excessive enjoyment is prescribed. What is needed is to follow the *middle path*. This will enable one to discover the right way. This right way, described by Buddha as *Astangika Marga* or the Noble Eight-fold Path, was attainable, the great teacher assured, through right views, right judgement, right language, right purpose, right profession, right applications, right memory and right meditation.

Buddha also prescribed for his disciples five fundamental precepts of moral code. These were to refrain from killing, stealing, adultery, indulging in falsehood and drunkenness. He also recommended for the monks as well as for the laity the observance of six fundamental virtues. These were charity, purity, patience, courage, contemplation and knowledge. The pursuit of the eight-fold path and the observance of the virtues enumerated above will enable the seeker to attain *Nirvana* or eternal salvation from the evils of existence.

Buddha discouraged speculations about divinities or the origin and end of the universe. His doctrines were based on practical ethics or morality and had an irresistible appeal to the mass of people among whom these were preached in languages and dialects spoken and understood by them.

Development of Buddhism and Buddhist Scriptures: Buddha preached his doctrines orally and no contemporary written records are available. At a much later date, attempts were made to collect, systematise and make these doctrines available in writing. For this purpose a council of Buddhists, known as the *First Buddhist Council*, met at Rajagriha soon after Buddha's death. According to traditional accounts, it was attended by five hundred eminent *bhikkhus* and *theras*. A large portion of the two *Pitakas*, *Sutta* and *Vinaya* was compiled by this council. The *Second Council* followed a century after Buddha's *parinirvana*. Its venue was Vaisali, it being held under the auspices of the Magadhan king, *Kalasoka*. Here, for the first time, differences arose over the observance of some rules of

minor import, which could not be resolved. As a result the original Tripitaka texts were accepted by one of the contending schools with some modifications. In course of time the Buddhist monks became split into several distinct sects. According to traditional accounts, an attempt was made by Asoka at the *Third Council* to restore the unity of the Buddhist church. The attempt only partly succeeded. Some of the sects no doubt ceased to exist, but others survived. The *Fourth Buddhist Council* is traditionally associated with the name of Kaniska. It met in Kashmir, according to the testimony of Hiuen-Tsang. In the meantime the schism in the Buddhist church had struck deeper roots than before. The church had by then become split into two distinct schools—*Mahayana* and *Hinayana*, differing from each other on the question of fundamental doctrines. While the *Hinayana* school continued to conform to the old practices, the *Mahayana* came to invest Buddha with the novel attributes of divinity. With them 'the veneration for a dead teacher was transformed into worship of a living saviour.' The Kashmir council not only re-arranged the *Pitakas* but probably also composed commentaries, *upadesha sashtras* and *vibhasa sashtras*, on them.

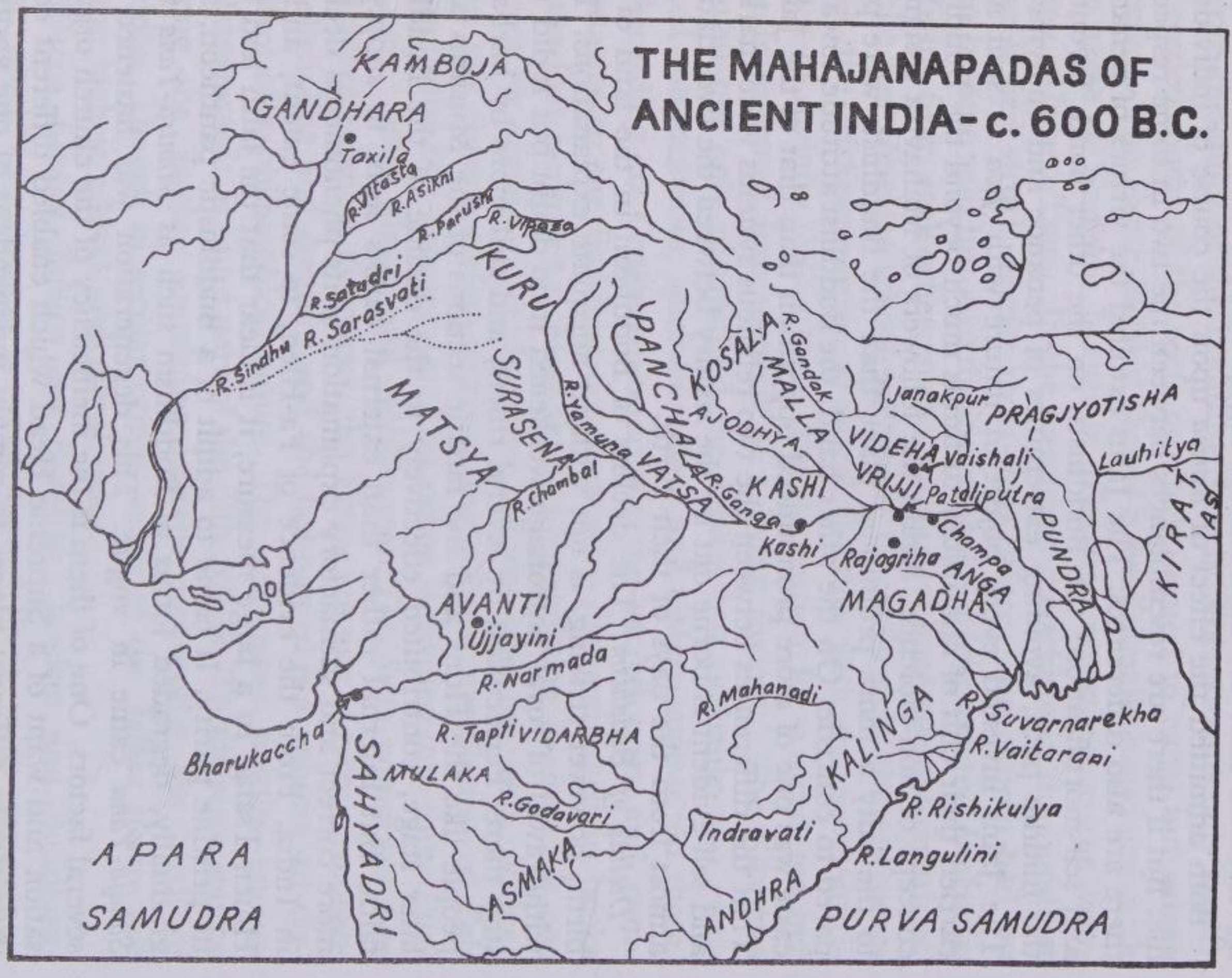
According to Ceylonese traditions the sacred texts and commentaries on the Buddhist doctrines were first published in books in the first century B.C. How far this information is correct is not known for certain. It is, however, evident that the texts, distinct from the commentaries, received the general appellation of *Pali Canon* in the fifth century A.D. This canon is divided into three *Pitakas*, viz. *Sutta*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma*. The *Sutta* comprises five *Nikayas* or religious discourses, the *Vinaya* consists of rules of monastic discipline and conduct and the last-named is a volume on discourses of a philosophical nature. The well-known treatise, known as *Dhammapada*, is but a part of the fifth *Nikaya*. To the same source belong the *Jatakas* containing legends concerning the birth of Buddha. Though of secular origin, many of the *Jataka* stories are of the highest ethical and moral value.

Relation Between Jainism and Buddhism: Jainism and Buddhism have much in common between them. Their main exponents, Mahavira Vardhamana and Gautama Buddha, came of Kshatriya families and were contemporaries. Their life stories reveal striking resemblances and both lived and preached in nearly the same areas in eastern and north-eastern India. Both the religions owe their origin to a reaction against the priest-dominated ritualistic

religions of the older times; both stressed the creed of non-injury and both expressed deliberate indifference to the authority of the Vedas and to the existence of gods. There was common denial of the efficacy of rituals and the acceptance of the monastic order as an essential unit of their church organisation.

Both admitted the effect of *Karma* upon the course of individual life. But if there are resemblances between the two in some respects, there are also differences. The Jains extolled the virtues of penance and self-mortification; the Buddhists, on the other hand, favoured the middle path, avoiding extremities of penance and enjoyment. The Jains invested every object in nature with *Jiva* or soul and carried their cult of non-injury to limits much beyond the Buddhist concept of non-violence. Again the followers of Mahavira assigned to the laity a more prominent place than the Buddhists were prepared to concede. On the other hand, the Buddhist attitude towards caste was one of more pronounced opposition than that of the Jains. That the differences between the two religious systems were marked and self-evident is borne out by the rivalry between the two, dating almost from the days of their birth.

Decline of Buddhism: The decline of Buddhism in the land of its birth, however striking, is not without adequate explanations. The withdrawal of royal patronage weakened it no doubt but it did not stop there. Persecution by several rulers, and still more by barbaric people like the Huns and the fanatic sections of the Muslims at a later stage, contributed effectively to the decline of the Buddhist faith. But internal rather than external causes seem to supply a more correct and satisfactory explanation of its phenomenal decline in India. From the evidence of Fa-Hien, to some extent, and of Hiuen-Tsang, in a large measure, it is clear that the faith had lost its pristine purity. It came to admit of a Buddhistic pantheon, and gradually, degraded forms of Buddhism such as *Mantra-Yana* and *Sahaja-Yana* came in vogue. This degeneration was hastened by several factors. One of them is the inefficiency of the church organisation and want of a Supreme Head which enabled different communities in different places to remain independent of one another. 'The introduction of notions and rites by foreign nations who adopted or favoured the Buddhist faith, but never completely renounced their old beliefs and habits' also served as a contributory cause of the decline of Buddhism. The wide prevalence of Buddhism in lands beyond India invariably brought into it the impact of foreign


THE MAHAJANAPADAS OF
ANCIENT INDIA- c. 600 B.C.
KAMBOJA
GANDHARA
Taxila
R.Vitasta
R.Asikni
R.Parushi
R.Vipasa
R.Satadri
R.Sindhu
R.Sarasvati
KURU
PANCHALA
KOSALA
R.Gandak
MALLA
Janakpur
PRAGJYOTISHA
Lauhitya
AJODHYA
VIDEHA
Vaishali
VRIJJI
Pataliputra
MATSYA
SURASENA
R.Yamuna
VATSA
R.Ganga
KASHI
Kashi
Champa
Rajagriha
ANGA
PUNDRA
KIRAT
AS
R.Chambal
AVANTI
Ujjayini
MAGADHA
R.Narmada
R.Mahanadi
R.Suvarnarekha
R.Vaitarani
Bharukaccha
R.Tapti
VIDARBHA
KALINGA
NIULAKA
SAHYADRI
R.Godavari
R.Rishikulya
Indravati
R.Langulini
ASMAKA
APARA
SAMUDRA
ANDHRA
PURVA SAMUDRA

notions, beliefs and cults and thus Buddhism ceased to be a religion of purely Indian origin and lost its appeal to the people of the country. The predominantly pessimistic nature of its teachings as embodied in the maxim *Sarvam duhkham, Sarvam anityam, Sarvam anatmyam* as well as its failure to furnish the conception of the deity are also held as subsidiary causes of the decline of Buddhistic influence on popular minds. But by far the most important single cause that accounts for the decline is to be sought in the remarkably assimilative character of Hinduism. Buddhism did not die; it was largely merged in Hinduism, reinvigorated through the efforts of religious reformers like Acharya Sankara and Kumarila. As observed by a learned scholar: 'When we consider the fact that Buddhism is only a landmark in the unending process of Indian thought we cannot but call the disappearance of Buddhism really a transformation of the old ideas into a new mould. Buddhism only lost its independent entity in the chain of Indian thought but its stamp on the Indian mind could not be eradicated.'

The Age of the Sixteen Mahajanapadas

Not many years ago it was generally believed that the connected, dated political history of India commenced only with Alexander's appearance on the Indian soil in 327 B.C. Thanks to the patient researches into the rich store-house of ancient literature, it has now been possible to lift the veil and light up the dark spaces in the spectrum of Indian history and push back our study by nearly six centuries. One of the most eminent scholars of recent times, the late Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri, brought to light ample materials enabling him to 'frame an outline of political history from Parikshit to Bimbisara out of materials supplied by Brahmanic as well as non-Brahmanic literature' for the first time. At any rate, the period from the sixth century B.C. is clear and it may be accepted as the definite date, beyond dispute, for the commencement of the continuous narrative political history of ancient India.

The Buddhist work, *Anguttara Nikaya*, provides us with the first glimpse into the political map of India, which closely approximates to the evidence on the subject as recorded in Jain *Bhagavati Sutra*. From their evidence we know of the existence of at least sixteen *Mahajanapadas* in the age immediately preceding the rise of Buddhism. These are *Gandhara* (Peshawar and Rawalpindi district), *Kamboja* (south-west Kashmir and parts of Kaferistan), *Kuru* (Thaneswar,

Delhi and Meerut districts), *Panchala* (Bareilly, Budaun and Farrukhabad districts), *Surasena* (Mathura), *Matsya* (Jaipur), *Malla* (Gorakhpur district), *Chedi* (region between the Jumna and the Narmada), *Vatsa* (Allahabad region), *Kasi* (Banaras), *Kosala* (Oudh), *Magadha* (south Bihar), *Anga* (east Bihar), *Vriji* (north Bihar) and *Asmaka* (on the Godavari).

The list mentions the names of several janapadas situated in Eastern India, suggestive of the fact that the centre of political gravity had shifted from the north and the north-west to eastern India. The *Kurus* and the *Panchalas* are no doubt mentioned but the period of their ascendancy was definitely over. Kasi now emerged as the most powerful state, surrounded by others, several of whom were getting ready to make a bid for greater political status and recognition.

The list, it should be understood, is not exhaustive. It does not mention some states like *Vanga*, referred to in earlier literature. This omission may have been due either to the fact that the list is incomplete or to the fact that such states, known to older literature, as are not mentioned in the *Nikaya* or *Sutra* list probably suffered loss of importance or had become actually merged in some neighbouring state.

It is further evident that four among the sixteen Mahajanapadas had grown into comparative importance. They were Kosala, Magadha, Avanti and Vatsa. Of these *Kosala* (to which Kasi was added) was the first to emerge into importance. But in the years immediately preceding the birth of Buddha, Kosala was already showing signs of weakness and the way was being prepared for the rise of new hegemonies. *Magadha* enjoyed the position of one of the leading powers and was destined, before long, to out-rival other contenders for supremacy and to emerge as the most powerful among the Mahajanapadas. *Avanti* and *Vatsa* too had their days of greatness but in the contest for power they were outdistanced by Magadha. Contemporary and later literature is full of references to the struggle for power in which Magadha emerged as the ultimate victor, destined to be the centre of an all-India empire within two centuries of Buddha's death.

Another interesting feature of the list is that it includes at least one Mahajanapada which was situated in the Deccan. This was *Asmaka* on the Godavari. It is of interest to note that in later times the Asmakas were associated by the classical writers with north-west India.

But the most striking feature about the Janapadas is that monarchical and republican states existed side by side with one another. The *Vriji*, for instance, was a confederacy of eight clans governed in accordance with republican principles, though in the preceding years it had known a monarchical form of government. Similarly, *Malla*, originally a monarchical state, enjoyed in the sixth century B.C. the status of a republic. There is also evidence of the existence of several other non-monarchical states not mentioned in the list. These were specially to be found among the tribal peoples like the *Sakyas* of Kapilavastu, the *Koliyas* of Ramagama, the *Bhaggas* of Susumagiri, the *Bulis* of Allakappa, the *Kalamas* of Kesaputta and the *Moriyas* of Pippalivana. The most important limb in their administrative machinery was the assembly, consisting of elected representatives of the people. The assembly was presided over by one of the representatives who usually took the title of *Raja*. The comparative freedom enjoyed by the individuals living in the republics is perhaps attested by the fact that the founders of the two heterodox religions, Buddhism and Jainism, came from the tribal republics.

The list, no doubt, reveals the lack of political unity, since India was divided into at least sixteen Mahajanapadas. But it also shows that forces were already at work to pave the way for political integration on a large scale. Out of the sixteen, four came out prominent and in the struggle for hegemony, the success of the Magadhan bid was already foreshadowed. In fact, the hegemony of Magadha was already an accomplished historical fact, so far as northern India was concerned, within less than a century of Buddha's death.

The Rise of Magadha

Early History: The name of Magadha first occurs in the *Atharvaveda*. From the way this early Vedic literature spoke of the people of this region it appears that they were held in contempt. This was presumably because they were yet to be brought under the impact of the Aryan culture which, however, had begun to travel eastward. According to the *Mahabharata* the earliest ruling family in Magadha was founded by *Brihadratha*. From Buddhist records it is evident that his dynasty was supplanted about the middle of the sixth century B.C. by the one founded by *Bimbisara*. If the testimony of *Asvaghosha* is to be believed, the new dynasty was known as that of the *Haryankas*.

Bid for Supremacy: The story of the Magadhan bid for hegemony commences with the accession of Bimbisara. He laid the foundations of the future greatness of his kingdom by the dual policy of diplomacy and war. The first accounted for friendly relations with *Gandhara* in the north-west and matrimonial connections with *Madra*, *Vaisali* and *Kosala* nearer home. The Kosalan connection was particularly profitable in that it secured the adhesion of *Kasi* to the Magadhan kingdom. Bimbisara is said to have conquered *Anga* by defeating in battle its king, Brahmadatta. According to tradition recorded in *Mahavagga* the number of townships in the enlarged kingdom of Bimbisara totalled 80,000. This is suggestive of the large extent of his dominions. His capital was Rajagriha.

Bimbisara's successor was his son *Ajatasatru*. He carried on with great vigour the work initiated by his father and added to the ancestral kingdom considerable areas of *Kasi* and *Vaisali* at the expense of the *Kosalans* and the *Vrijis* respectively. These events probably took place about the time of Buddha's death. The only remaining kingdom that could rival Magadha, at that stage, was *Avanti*. There is no positive evidence of any actual conflict between Ajatasatru and the contemporary ruler of Avanti, though the former is known to have fortified his capital in anticipation of a conflict.

The accounts of the reign of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, it has been rightly claimed, 'give evidence of a definite policy aimed at the control of as much of the course of the Ganges as possible. It seems that they were the first Indian kings to conceive the possibility of a far-flung empire.'

Udayin or *Udayibhadra*, who, according to the Pali Canon, succeeded Ajatasatru, is chiefly remembered as the founder of the new capital of Pataliputra, destined to be the historic capital of the first known empire in India.

We know, however, little or nothing about the successors of Udayin—*Anuruddha*, *Munda* and *Naga Dasaka*, according to Ceylonese chronicles and *Nandi Vardhana* and *Mahanandin*, according to the Puranas. Nothing definite or creditable about them is on record. According to the version of the Puranas the last representative of the line of Bimbisara was removed from the throne which was offered to *Amatya Sisunaga* by the will of the people.

The advent of a new dynasty, however, did not mean the abandonment of the policy initiated by Bimbisara. Sisunaga brought the conflict with Avanti to an end with a resounding victory over

the *Pradyotas* and extended the limits of his kingdom as far east as Banaras. The next ruler was *Kakavarna* or *Kalasoka* whose name is associated with the Second Buddhist Council held at Vaisali within a century of Buddha's death. He was succeeded by his ten sons who, curiously enough, are said to have ruled simultaneously. No reliable evidence of their rule is available except that the last of them was overthrown by the founder of a new line of rulers, viz. that of *Nandas*.

As in the case of the accession to power of Sisunaga, so in that of the advent of the Nandas there was no departure from the traditional policy aimed at the expansion of Magadhan territories. Rather it found an exceptionally vigorous champion in *Mahapadma Nanda*, the founder of the new dynasty. The Puranas bestow on him the epithets of *Ekarat* (the sole ruler) and *Sarvakshatrantaka* (the exterminator of all the Kshatriyas). The classical writers bear testimony to his prowess and military resources. It has been claimed on the basis of later epigraphic records that the region of *Kalinga* and parts of *Maharashtra* were included within his dominions. The vastness of the territory over which he ruled has won for him recognition as the first historical emperor of Northern India. The classical writers mention the vast army at the disposal of the Nanda rulers of Magadha—20,000 cavalry, 2,00,000 infantry, and 36,000 elephantry.

The sons of Mahapadma did not succeed in retaining the throne for long. We learn from several literary sources including the Puranas and Kautilya's *Arthasashtra* that the last of the Nanda kings, *Dhana Nanda*, was overthrown by Chandragupta, the founder of the historic royal family of the Mauryas (322-21 B.C.).

FOREIGN INVASIONS

1. *The Persian Invasion*

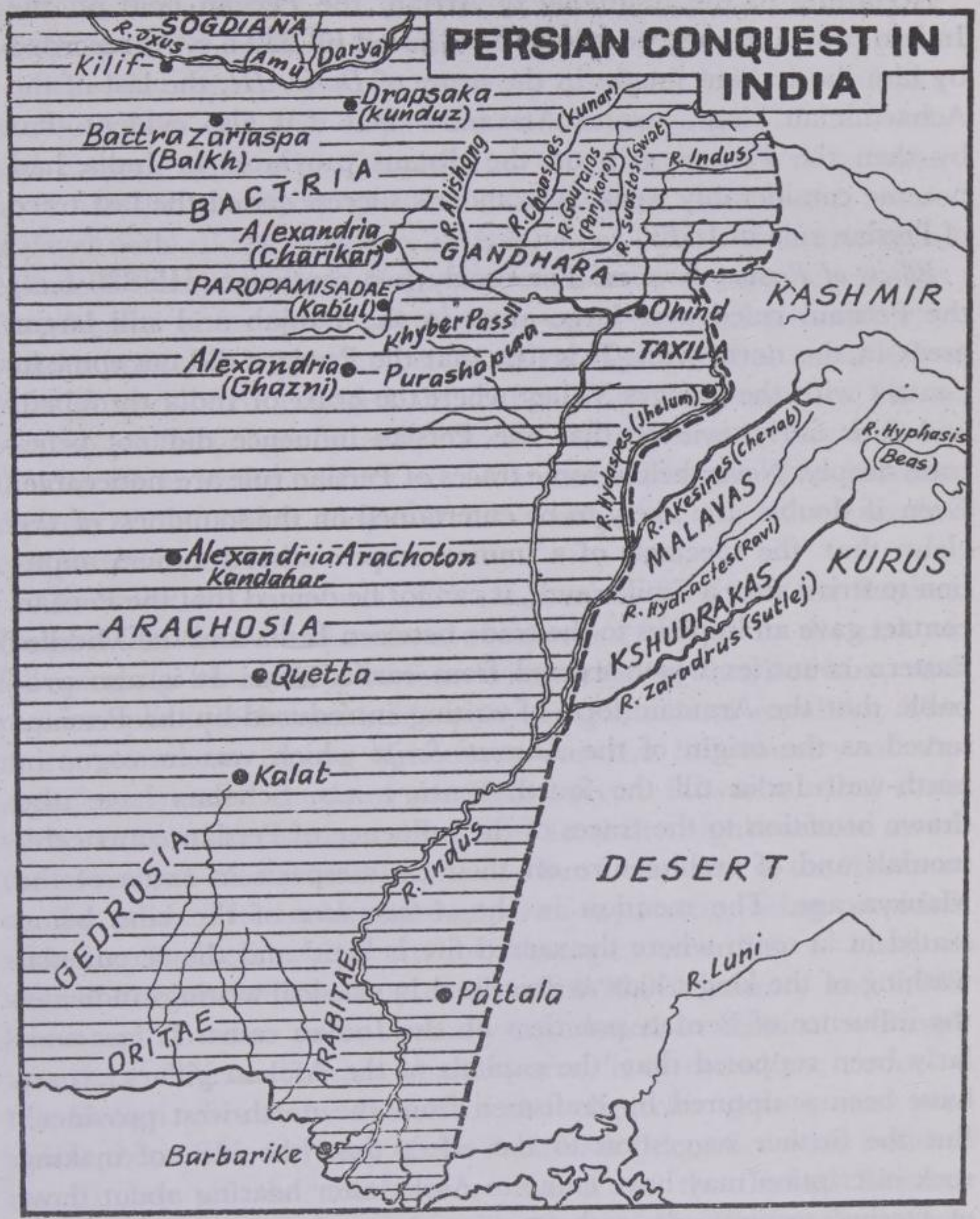
While the foundations of a mighty and extensive empire in the interior of India were being slowly and steadily laid by successive royal families of Magadha, the weak and poorly defended frontiers of India along the north-west witnessed two waves of well-planned foreign invasions. The first of these was led by the Achaeminian rulers of Persia.

Under the Achaeminids Persia rose to be the seat of the greatest imperial power in the sixth century B.C., seeking expansion on all

sides. The lust for territories brought them into contact with countries as distant as the Mediterranean world, Egypt and India. Classical writers, like Herodotus, Ktesias, Xenophon and others, refer to the eastern campaigns of Kurush or Cyrus (558-530 B.C.). According to Herodotus the areas conquered by the Persian king in the east included Drangiana (part of Seistan), Sattagydia (probably in Ghazni) and Gandaritis (Gandhara). Ktesias, however, is more positive. According to him Cyrus died of a wound inflicted in battle by an Indian, 'a battle which the Indians were fighting on the side of Derbikes whom they supplied with elephant'. Xenophon not only refers to the 'Bactrians and Indians' having been brought under the rule of Cyrus, but also to the despatch of tribute to the Persian monarch by an Indian king. On the basis of these statements it has been concluded that 'Cyrus conquered the borderland between Iran and India and won for himself a position which gained him a tribute from a king of Northern India, if not his vassalage.' This conclusion is not, however, considered tenable by many on the ground that later Greek writers like Nearchos and Megasthenes are positive that Cyrus did not actually invade India, though the former concedes that he probably formed such a project.

However doubtful the claim of Cyrus in respect of conquests in India may be, we have indisputable evidence that one of his successors, *Darayavarish* or *Darius* (522-486 B.C.), did conquer territories on the Indian mainland. Two of his inscriptions discovered at Persepolis and Naksh-i-Rustam, respectively dated *c.* 518-515 and 515 B.C. positively testify to Persian conquest of northern Punjab. These conquests were presumably effected after 518 B.C., for the earlier Behistun inscription of that date does not refer to these events, but before 515 B.C., as the two later records definitely prove. Another inscription of the same ruler, known as Hamadan Gold and Silver Tablet inscription, mentions *Sindhu* as a province of the Persian empire. We are also told on the authority of Herodotus that 'India' was the twentieth and the most populous satrapy, paying a tribute of 360 talents of gold dust. The same writer also informs us that at the direction of Darius, Skylax undertook a voyage in order to explore the possibility of a maritime passage from the mouth of the Indus to Persia. This was, in all probability, undertaken after Darius had brought the Indus Valley under his control (*c.* 517 B.C.).

That the Indian conquests of Darius continued to be in the


PERSIAN CONQUEST IN INDIA
SOGDIANA
R. Oxus
Amu Darya
Kilif
Drapsaka (kunduz)
Baktra Zariaspa (Balkh)
BACTRIA
Alexandria (Charikar)
PAROPAMISADAE
(Kabul)
Khyber Pass
Alexandria (Ghazni)
Purashapura
R. Alishang
R. Choaspes (Kunar)
R. Gouraios (Panjkora)
Suastos (Swat)
R. Indus
GANDHARA
Ohind
TAXILA
KASHMIR
R. Hydaspes (Jhelum)
R. Akesines (Chenab)
MALAVAS
R. Hyphasis (Beas)
R. Hydractes (Ravi)
KSHUDRAKAS
KURUS
R. Zaradrus (Sutlej)
Alexandria Arachoton
Kandahar
ARACHOSIA
Quetta
Kalat
GEDROSIA
ORITAE
ARABITAE
R. Indus
Pattala
DESERT
R. Luni
Barbarike

possession of his successor, *Khshayarsha* or *Xerxes* (486-465 B.C.) is borne out by the statement of Herodotus that the Indians 'clad in cotton' and bearing 'cane bows and arrows tipped with iron' were a part of his army engaged in war against Hellas during the years 486-465 B.C.

According to the testimony of Arrian, the Persian hold on the Indian provinces may be said to have lasted till 330 B.C. As recorded by him the Indians fought in the army of *Darius III*, the last of the Achaeminian kings, against Alexander. But it is also evident that by then the Persian grip on the distant provinces in India had become considerably weak. Alexander's success ended the last trace of Persian rule in India.

Effects of Persian Invasion: For nearly two centuries (515-330 B.C.) the Persians ruled over large areas in the Punjab and still larger areas in the north-west. It is true that the Persians did not come in contact with the Ganges Valley where the heart of India throbbed, and it is fairly evident that the Persian influence did not penetrate deeply. Nevertheless, some traces of Persian rule are noticeable. Even if doubts are likely to be entertained on the soundness of the claim that 'the spectacle of a unified empire stirred Indian ambition to strive after a similar end', it cannot be denied that the Persian contact gave an impetus to the trade between India and the Middle-Eastern countries which existed from earlier days. It is also probable that the Aramaic form of writing introduced by the Persians served as the origin of the *Kharosti Script* which was in vogue in north-west India till the fourth century A.D. Scholars have also drawn attention to the traces of the influence of Persian court ceremonials and of architecture on their counterparts in India of the Maurya age. The mention in the *Arthasashtra* of the king being seated in 'a room where the sacred fire is kept' and the ceremonial washing of the king's hair as described in classical writings indicates the influence of Persian practices on the Indian court. It has similarly been supposed that 'the capitals of the Asokan pillars...may have been sculptured by craftsmen from the north-west province'. But the further suggestion to the effect that 'the idea of making rock inscription may have come to Asoka after hearing about those of Darius' seems to be rather remote or at best a conjecture for which there is hardly any evidence.

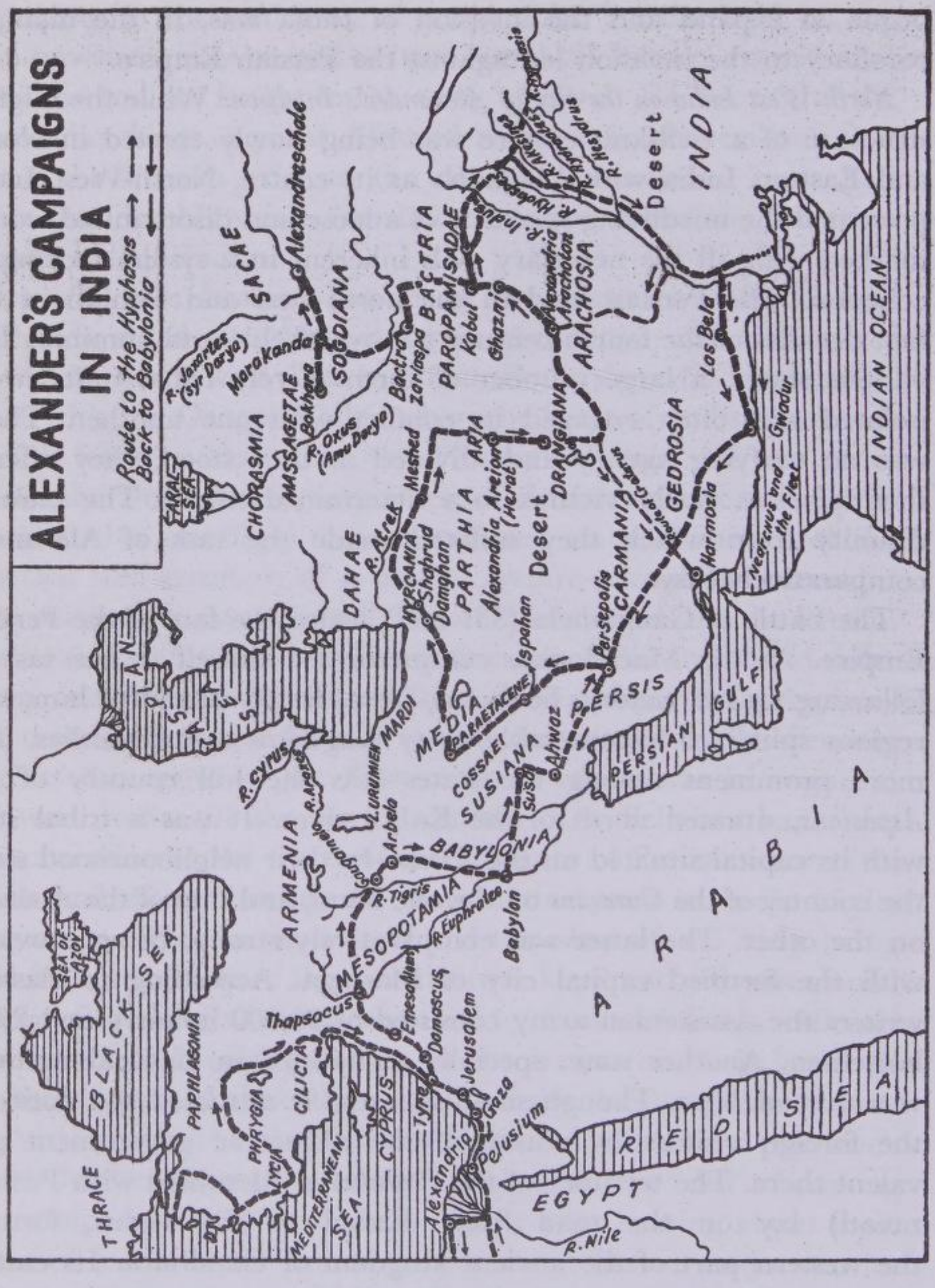
2. *The Macedonian Invasion*

The second foreign invasion of India, associated with one of the

greatest war-lords of the ancient world, has won much greater celebrity than the first invasion launched by the Persians. Alexander did not set out from the homeland of Macedonia with the ambition of world conquest. But as he progressed in his march his ambition began to expand and the invasion of India was, in the main, a corollary to the invasion led against the Persian Empire.

North-West India on the Eve of Alexander's Invasion: While the mighty structure of a well-knit empire was being slowly erected in North and Eastern India with Magadha as its centre, North-West India presented the unedifying spectacle of a loose and disorganised world, marked with all the necessary evils inherent in a system lacking in cohesion. The Persian hold in the north-west and Punjab in the first decades of the fourth century B.C. was feeble and nominal. The various states, a large number of them merely tribal units, were isolated and often engaged in conflict with one another. There was no unifying agency and, divided as they stood, they offered themselves as ready victims to a determined enemy. The chronic disunity from which they suffered made the task of Alexander comparatively easy.

The battle of Gaugamela (331 B.C.) sealed the fate of the Persian Empire. As the Macedonian conqueror set himself to the task of following up his victory, he found, immediately ahead of him, vast regions split into innumerable petty kingdoms and republics. The more prominent among the states was the hill country of the *Aspasians*, situated north of the Kabul river. It was a tribal state with its capital situated on the *Kunar*. In their neighbourhood stood the country of the *Guraeans* on the one hand, and that of the *Assakenes* on the other. The latter was comparatively strong, being provided with the fortified capital city of Massaga. According to classical writers the Assakenian army consisted of 30,000 infantry and 2,000 horsemen. Another state, specially mentioned in classical writings, was that of *Nysa*. Though small in area, it attracted the notice of the foreign visitors by reason of the oligarchic government prevalent there. The territory of the *Penkelaotis* (identified with Pushkaravati) lay on the road from Kabul to the Indus, forming the western part of the ancient kingdom of Gandhara. Its eastern part was then known as *Taxila*. The kingdom was extensive, populous and well-governed. The kingdom in the mountainous region immediately above Taxila, known as *Abhisara* (Poonch and Nowshera districts in Kashmir), was probably a part of the old kingdom


ALEXANDER'S CAMPAIGNS IN INDIA
Route to the Hyphasis
Back to Babylonia
SACAE
Alexandreschate
R. Jaxartes (Syr Darya)
Marakanda
MASSAGETAE
Bokhara
SOGDIANA
R. Oxus (Amu Darya)
Bactra
Zariaspa
BACTRIA
PAROPAMISADAE
Kabul
Ghazni
Alexandria Arachotou
ARACHOSIA
Desert
INDIA
R. Indus
R. Hydaspes
R. Acesines
Los Bela
ARAL SEA
CHORASMIA
DAHAE
R. Atrek
Mashed
HYRCANIA
Shahrud
Damghan
PARTHIA
Alexandria Areion (Herat)
DRANGIANA
GEDROSIA
Harmozia
Negrchus and the Flet
Gwadur
INDIAN OCEAN
MEDIA
PARAETACENE
Ispahan
Desert
Persepolis
CARMANIA
PERSIS
PERSIAN GULF
R. CYRUS
CASPIAN SEA
SUSIANA
Susa
Ahwaz
ARMENIA
R. Araxes
L. URUMIEH
Arbela
BABYLONIA
MESOPOTAMIA
R. Tigris
R. Euphrates
Babylon
ARABIA
BLACK SEA
SEA OF AZOV
PAPHLAGONIA
Thapsacus
Emesa
Damascus
Jerusalem
Tyre
Gaza
PHRYGIA
CILICIA
CYPRUS
LYCIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Alexandria
Pelusium
RED SEA
EGYPT
R. Nile
THRACE

of Kamboja. Another offshoot of this ancient kingdom was *Arsakes* (ancient Urasa), identified with modern Hazara district. In the region between the Jhelum and the Chenab was situated the kingdom of the elder *Poros* (Puru or Paurava). Classical writers describe it as an extensive area containing about 300 cities and give its army strength as consisting of 50,000 infantry, 3,000 horse and 1,000 chariots. Another country named by the classical writers was that of the *Glaukanikai*, situated immediately adjacent to the kingdom of Poros and containing a number of populous towns. The small kingdom lying between the Chenab and the Ravi was ruled over by the younger Poros, a nephew of the elder king of the same name. To the east of the Jhelum lay the kingdom of *Sophytes* (Saubhuti), then probably ruled by a viceroy and not an independent king. Another kingdom was that of Mousikanos (modern Sind) with its capital identified with Alor in the modern Sukkur district.

All the above states to which reference has been made, with exception of Nysa, were monarchical in form. But classical sources indicate the existence of a fairly large number of republican states, mostly of an oligarchical type. The *Siboi*, for example, who lived in the region south of the Jhelum-Chenab junction are supposed to have had an army of 40,000 infantry at the time of Alexander's invasion. The *Agalassoi* who lived near the Siboi possessed an infantry of the same strength as their neighbours besides 3,000 cavalry. Among other republican states were those of the *Oxydrakai* (Kshudrakas) living between the Ravi and the Bias, and celebrated as a warlike people, the *Malloi* (Malavas) and the *Abastanoi* (Ambasthas) belonging to the lower Chenab region whose army consisted of 60,000 foot, 6,000 horse and 500 chariots.

Alexander's March and Progress in India: The victory of Gaugamela opened out to Alexander the prospect of conquering the remnants of the former Persian Empire. At the end of long and successful campaignings in Bactria he crossed the Hindukush and landed on the Kabul district. He overcame the fierce resistance of the hill tribes, descended on the Kabul valley and crossed the Indus above Attock in the spring of 336 B.C.

The classical writers are our only sources for the story of Alexander's march and campaigns in India. No Indian records make even casual references to them. Even the classical accounts are at times difficult to reconstruct owing to the uneasy task of identifying the geographical names recorded therein. The outlines,

however, seem to be clear, on the whole. The Macedonian leader had no knowledge of the Indian topography, but his task was rendered comparatively easy since North-Western India and the Punjab were thoroughly disunited and the tribes and kingdoms situated therein were often at war with one another.

As Alexander appeared before Taxila he did not anticipate any encounter, as its king *Omphis* (*Ambhi*), we are told by Curtius, had already informed the invader that he would receive from him submission and not resistance. Ambhi kept his word and submitted without resistance. Alexander was enough of a diplomat to leave behind a Macedonian garrison in Taxila before he started on his march eastward. As he reached the bank of the *Hydaspes* (Jhelum) he met, for the first time in India, the prospect of determined opposition from Poros (Paurava). The latter lay encamped on the right bank of the river, resolved to resist the invaders. The Macedonian leader avoided an immediate encounter and, unobserved by the enemies, crossed the river at a point seventeen miles upward from the site where Poros and his men awaited. The encounter took place in the Karri plain. The valour of Poros and his men was of little avail against the superior military tactics of the invaders whose main strength lay in mounted archers and picked Macedonian horsemen. The so-called battle of Hydaspes ended in an unqualified victory for Alexander. The victor, however, thought it prudent to seek reconciliation and not only restored to his erstwhile enemy the possession of his kingdom but, according to Plutarch, also helped him to add to its former boundaries '5,000 considerable cities and villages without number'. Such action was prompted more by expediency than generosity.

Alexander whose army had in the meantime been reinforced with the arrival of the Thracian troops now moved towards the *Akesenis* (Chenab), crossed it and took the entire region between the Chenab and the Ravi whose ruler Poros II withdrew without resistance on the approach of the invading armies.

The next encounters were fought, as Alexander marched up the Ravi, with a number of republican tribes. The *Kathaoi* (Kathas) offered him valiant resistance from within the fortified town of Sangala, but were forced to submit after serious casualties—17,000 killed and 70,000 captured. The two kings of the contiguous region, Sophytes (Saubhuti) and Phegelas (Bhagala), made no attempt at resistance.

The next stage of his march, destined to be his limit, brought Alexander and his army on the bank of the Hyphasis (Beas). Here his soldiers refused to proceed further and insisted on retracing their steps. All persuasions by Alexander were of no avail and failed to make them change their minds; they grew to be mutinous. Probably they were war-worn or home-sick, or it may have been due, as has been suggested, to their sense of alarm caused by the report of the vast military resources at the disposal of the king of Magadha. Whatever the reasons, the Beas remained uncrossed and the victor, with a record of uninterrupted success to his credit, ordered a general retreat (July 326 B.C.).

Alexander's Retreat: Alexander retraced his steps to the Jhelum following the same route by which he had arrived. Thereafter he sent part of his army down the river under the command of Nearchos, and himself led the remaining troops along the areas in the lower valley of the Ravi and the Chenab. The warlike tribes dwelling in these areas offered him stubborn resistance at different stages of his march. The chief organisers of these resistance activities were the *Malloi* and the *Oxydrakai*. Alexander himself received a dangerous wound while storming a fortress of the Malloi. The entire course of Macedonian march along these areas was marked by fierce and desperate contests attended with heavy casualties. The inhabitants of a city, we are informed by the Greak writers, burnt themselves to death after their resistance proved to be ineffective. Before Alexander sailed to the open sea, he received the submission of Sind. In October 325 B.C. he quitted India.

Effects of the Macedonian Invasion: Opinions differ on the assessment of Alexander's invasion of India. We have hardly any evidence to corroborate Smith's premise that 'Alexander undoubtedly had intended to annex permanently the Indian provinces in the basin of the Indus and to include them in his vast empire extending across Asia into Greece.' It is perhaps more reasonable to suppose that his aims were more restricted, being concerned with the desire 'to reach the easternmost parts of Darius' empire and to solve the problem of ocean, the limits of which were a puzzle to Greek geographers'. Whatever the objectives might have been, the Indian expeditions of Alexander were but a minor episode and their direct effects were limited to the establishment of several military posts or 'Yona' settlement in the Kabul, Jhelum and Sind regions (2 Alexandrias, Boukephala and Nikaia). The only other direct

effect was that the campaigns by Alexander helped to open up four distinct lines of communication between the east and the west, three by land and one by sea. The theory that at one time sought a link between the Macedonian invasion and the presence of some distinctly Hellenic elements in India's culture pattern is no longer held as valid, for such elements are to be ascribed to later times when the Greeks settled down in Bactria and parts of Uttarapatha. Smith rightly points out that 'the Greek influence never penetrated deeply. Indian polity and the structure of society resting on a caste basis remained substantially unchanged and even in military service the Indians showed no disposition to learn the lessons taught by the sharp sword of Alexander.' In a sense it could hardly be otherwise, for the total stay of Alexander in India did not last beyond nineteen months.

The indirect results are, however, more important. The Macedonian invasion swept away the numerous petty states into which North-West India was divided and thus paved the way for the future unification of the country at no distant date under the leadership of Chandragupta Maurya.

From the point of view of Indian history the main importance of Alexander's invasion is derived from the incidental fact that many Greeks who accompanied him wrote accounts which have partially survived in the form of references and quotations by later writers, and in spite of obvious exaggerations, distortions and free indulgence in fantasies, the classical accounts are a valuable source-material for India of the fourth century B.C.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FIRST MAGADHAN EMPIRE

The Mauryan Phase

The emergence of the Mauryas as the ruling authority in Magadha introduces to us one of the richest and most fruitful epochs in the history of ancient India. The period is rich in respect of source-materials—literary as well as epigraphic—which are available in abundance. It witnessed the growth of imperial unity to an unprecedented level, enabling the unification of India under the auspices of a single common authority. It also saw, among other things, the elevation of Buddhism to the status of a world religion, the extension of philanthropic and cultural activities of India much beyond her own shores, and the remarkable experiment in promoting international peace and harmony through abandonment of war and violence.

Chandragupta Maurya

The ancestry of Chandragupta, the founder of the Maurya dynasty, is described differently in different traditional accounts. The Jain tradition as recorded in *Parisishtaparvan* represents him as the son of a daughter of the chief of the village of Mayura-poshaka. Classical writers hint at his 'mean or humble origin'. In later Brahmanical texts Chandragupta is represented as the son of a Nanda king of Magadha by a *Sudra* woman named *Mura*. On the other hand, Buddhist sources like *Mahaparinirvana Sutta* and *Divyavadana* claim for Chandragupta a Kshatriya lineage. The former, being the earliest literary work on the subject, specifically states that the first Maurya was descended from the *Moriya* clan of the Kshatriyas of Pippalivana. The same claim also occurs in later mediaeval records. It is thus almost certain that Chandragupta was sprung from a clan of the Kshatriyas, viz. that of the Moriyas of Pippalivana.

The early career of Chandragupta is not known in detail. It is probable that he spent his early days in Magadha whose sway had already extended over Pippalivana. It is learnt from the accounts of Plutarch and Justin that in his youth Chandragupta visited the camp of Alexander. Presumably his object was to persuade the Macedonian hero to launch an attack on the Nandas. The

mission no doubt failed. But Chandragupta did not have to wait for long. We know from Indian and classical sources that the last Nanda monarch was disliked by his subjects on account of his misrule and oppression. The ambitious and energetic youth exploited the situation to his advantage, recruited his own army, and helped by the counsels of *Kautilya* (also called *Chanakya* or *Vishnugupta*), a Taxilan Brahman noted for his practical wisdom, challenged the authority of the Nanda king and overthrew his rule. Ancient works like *Milindapanha*, *Puranas* and *Mudrarakshasa* contain traditional versions of the conflict between Chandragupta and his Nanda antagonist.

The overthrow of the Nandas and the expulsion of the Greek garrisons from the Punjab and North-West India are the two remarkable achievements of Chandragupta. The order of succession of these two outstanding events is not, however, definitely known. The movement aimed at the expulsion of the Macedonian garrisons had started even before Alexander had actually left the soil of India. His departure, followed within a couple of years by his death, must have given an impetus to the movement. To Chandragupta belongs the credit of liberating the Punjab and the north-west by exterminating the last traces of Macedonian military rule.

The overthrow of the Nandas and the Macedonians brought large areas of north and north-western India under the rule of the first Maurya. It is probable that Kalinga which was included within the dominions of Mahapadma Nanda also formed a part of Chandragupta's empire. The evidence recorded in Rudradaman's Junagadh Inscription proves the inclusion of Saurashtra in the dominions ruled over by Chandragupta. The cumulative evidence supplied by such diverse sources as Plutarch and Justin, Tamil literature and Mysore inscriptions also points to the probability that Chandragupta's empire extended as far south as the Tinnevelly district.

To Chandragupta also belongs the credit of extending Maurya authority beyond the confines of India's geographical frontiers on the north-west. We learn from Appianus that Seleucos Nikator, a former general of Alexander and then king of Syria, in a bid to resubjugate the eastern dominions of his former master, crossed the Indus and waged war on Chandragupta 'until he made friends and entered into relations of marriage with him'. The fact of an actual war between Seleucos and Chandragupta is not recorded

by any other classical writer; but they are unanimous about a treaty being concluded between the two. The treaty provided for cession by the Syrian monarch, in favour of the Maurya Emperor, of four satrapies, viz. *Aria* (Herat), *Arachosia* (Kandahar), *Gedrosia* (Makran) and *Paropanisadai* (Kabul) in exchange for 500 elephants. To cement friendly relations between Syria and India, Seleucos deputed an ambassador named *Megasthenes* to the Mauryan court of Pataliputra.

Thus the Maurya empire under Chandragupta became nearly coextensive with the whole of India with the exception of the Far South and the easternmost districts beyond the Brahmaputra, extending right up to the Hindukush described as 'the scientific frontier of India'.

Jain traditions record that after a reign of twenty-four years Chandragupta abdicated and retired to Sravana-Belgola where he spent his last days till he starved himself to death after the approved Jain manner.

Megasthenes: Megasthenes arrived at Pataliputra as an accredited ambassador from the Syrian court and spent some years in the royal city though the exact period of his stay is not known. He wrote an account of his impressions which, however, has come down to us in fragments surviving through extracts and quotations by later classical writers. It is true that he was not always critical and accurate but 'it is undeniable that his record is of great importance as the first authentic and connected description of India by a foreign traveller.'

Bindusara Amitraghata

Chandragupta's son and successor, according to the Puranas, was Bindusara. Strabo informs us that the new ruler was known by the epithet of *Amitrochates*. This has been accepted as a corruption of the Sanskritic term *Amitraghata* (killer of enemies) or *Amitrakhada* (devourer of enemies).

Bindusara had perhaps the misfortune of being the son of an illustrious father and the father of a still more illustrious son. Not much information about him and his reign is available. Later sources like Hemachandra and Taranath state that Chanakya or Kautilya continued to serve as his chief counsellor. The latter further informs us that Bindusara defeated the kings of sixteen towns and 'made himself master of all the territory between the eastern

and western seas'. Some scholars are of the opinion that the Deccan was added to the Maurya dominions in the days of Bindusara. The evidence cited in support of this claim does not appear to be convincing or conclusive. It appears more reasonable, on the basis of extant evidence, to assign the credit for the absorption of the Deccan to his illustrious father.

Another event of the reign of Bindusara about which there is no doubt is the suppression of a revolt which had broken out in Taxila as a protest against the misdeeds of 'wicked ministers'. The revolt was suppressed by Asoka who was sent there as Viceroy at the instance of his father.

It is evident that even if Bindusara did not add to, he certainly preserved the integrity of the dominions inherited from his father. He followed his father's policy by maintaining friendly relations with Syria and Egypt, then ruled by Antiochos Soter and Ptolemy Philadelphos respectively. There is evidence of exchanges of letters and envoys between Magadha and the two kingdoms beyond the confines of India.

According to the evidence recorded in the Puranas, Bindusara ruled for twenty-five years. It is thus probable that his reign came to an end in about 273 B.C.

Asoka Priyadarshi

Bindusara's successor was his son Asoka, one of the greatest rulers known to world history. The name 'Asoka' occurs only in two inscriptions, viz. the Gurjara and Maski version of Rock Edict I. In all other available records, both epigraphic and literary, he is mentioned as *Devanampiya Priyadarshi Raja*. The fuller form of his name as known to tradition is Asokavardhana.

Asoka's accession, according to Ceylonese chronicles, is set against the background of a fierce, fratricidal war in course of which Asoka is stated to have killed ninety-nine of his brothers. This seems to be a wild legend deliberately woven to emphasise the miraculous power of Buddhism (to which Asoka later became a convert) which transformed a monster of cruelty into a great apostle of peace, love and harmony. What is known to sober history is that Asoka succeeded to the throne, for which there were, in all probability, other contenders, not excluding his own brothers. His experience as Viceroy of Ujjain and then of Taxila was of great help to him besides the support of minister Radhagupta. But even then, for some

time following his accession, the new monarch did not feel his position sufficiently secure so that he had to postpone his consecration for four years after accession to the throne.

Like his two predecessors Asoka, for at least twelve years after his accession, was aggressive at home and pacifist abroad. He continued the policy initiated by Chandragupta and aimed at cultivation of friendly relations with the contemporary foreign rulers. At home he imitated the example of the founder of the dynasty in seeking conquest. Kalinga was the first, and destined to be the last, victim of his aggression. In his edicts the Kalingas are described as an unsubdued people. This was because either in the interval between the rule of the last Nandas and the accession of Chandragupta or in succeeding years Kalinga repudiated allegiance to the imperial authority of Magadha and proclaimed independence. The sight of a powerful independent kingdom as a sort of wedge between the northern and southern provinces of the Maurya empire was far from pleasing to the Magadhan suzerain. In the thirteenth year since his accession Asoka launched an offensive on the kingdom of Kalinga. A sanguinary war followed in course of which 'one hundred and fifty thousand persons were carried away captive, one hundred thousand slain and many times that died' (R. E. XIII). Asoka emerged triumphant and Kalinga became a viceroyalty under the Maurya empire, with its headquarters at Tosali. The conquest of Kalinga was the last link in the chain of military exploits which led to the culmination of the policy of territorial aggrandisement initiated by Bimbisara more than two centuries and a half ago.

But the military success won at a high price brought about a radical change in the mind and thoughts of the victor. Its impact was destined to profoundly affect the course of history.

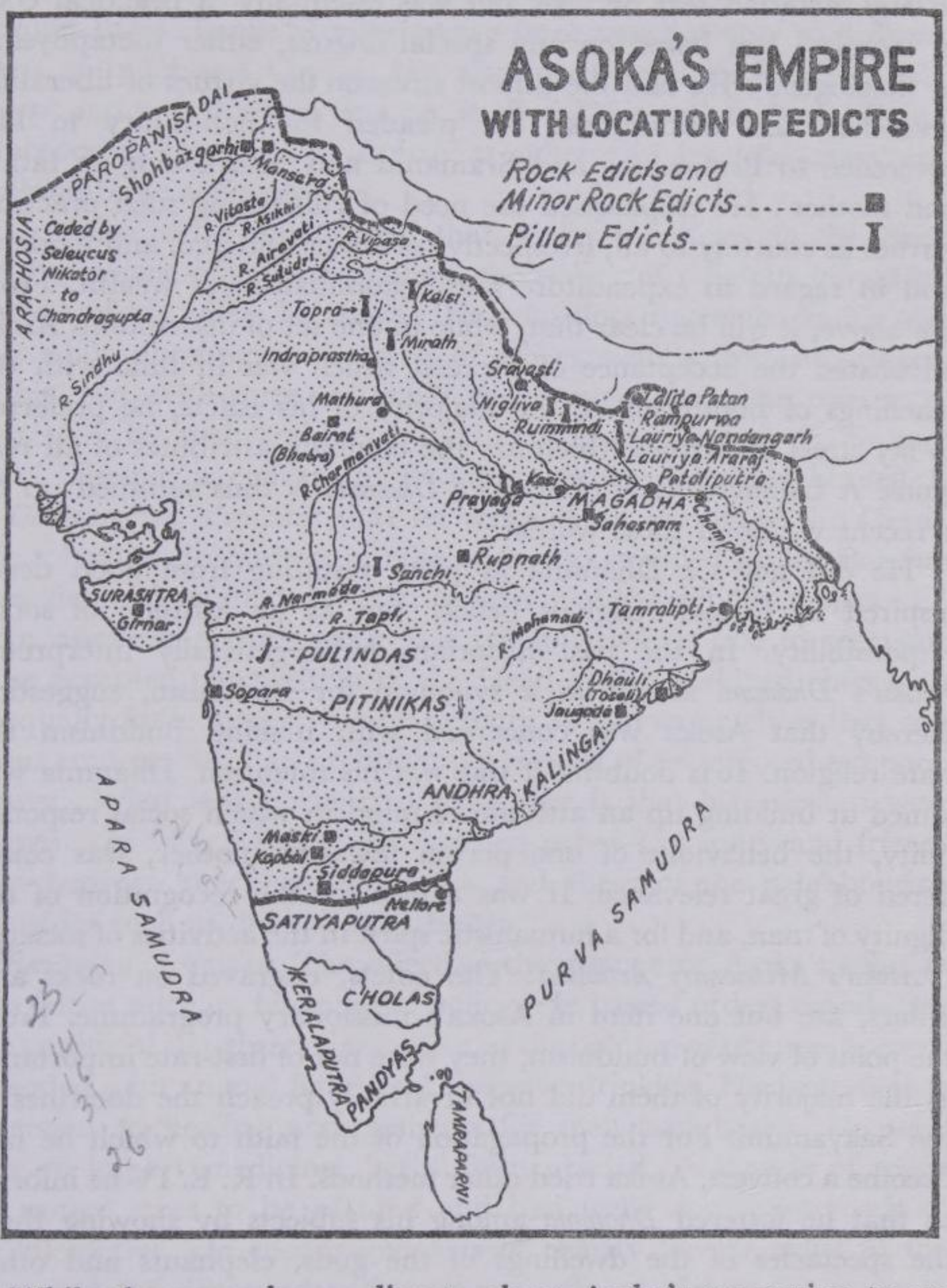
Extent of Asoka's Dominions: The victory won in the Kalinga war was the high watermark of Magadhan expansion. No other Indian ruler of ancient or early mediaeval times is known to have presided over such extensive areas as Asoka did. His edicts provide us with a clear picture of the extent of his dominions. In the north-west it touched the borders of the Syrian empire and extended over the territories inhabited by the *Yonas*, *Kambojas* and *Gandharas*. In the north the inclusion of Kashmir and Nepal tarai is proved by the evidence recorded by Hiuen-Tsang and Kalhana as well as by the testimony of inscriptions, specially the pillar inscriptions of Rum-

mindei and Nigali Sagar. In the east the Asokan empire extended over Bengal and as far as the Brahmaputra, though definite evidence of the inclusion of Kamarupa is lacking. The western limits of the empire were marked by Saurashtra and the Arabian Sea. In the south its limit was the Pennar river beyond which lay the independent Tamil kingdoms of the Cholas, Keralas, Pandyas and Satiyaputras. On the basis of the available evidence it has been claimed that 'Asoka's empire embraced the major part of India, including the North-West Frontier province but excluding the Indian peninsula to the south of approximately 14° of latitude.'

Asoka's Dhamma: The Kalinga war is usually regarded as a turning-point in the career of Asoka as well as in the history of India. Asoka, according to the testimony of Kalhana, was originally a Deva-worshipper, a *Saiva*. The sight of indescribable misery and bloodshed witnessed on the field of Kalinga is said to have made a deep and profound impression on his mind. We are informed in R. E. XIII: 'Now that the country of the Kalingas has been conquered, the Beloved of the Gods is devoted to an intense practice of the duties relating to Dhamma, to a longing for Dhamma and to the inculcation of Dhamma among the people.' Buddhist traditions affirm that immediately after this sanguinary war, Asoka, with his mind torn with remorse, sought refuge in the teachings of Buddha and became a convert to his faith. It is possible that the Kalinga war gave an impetus to a process which might have a much earlier beginning. Asoka himself admits that it took him two and a half years to become a zealous devotee of Buddhism.

The change of religion for Asoka was more than a matter of personal importance. He did not remain content with his personal devotion to the new faith; he wanted to share it with the people all around. The convert thus became a missionary. Backed by the mighty resources of his empire, the imperial missionary set himself ceaselessly to the task of propagation of religion as he understood it. There is positive evidence that Asoka had embraced Buddhism. Minor Rock Edict I, for example, informs us that he entered the *Samgha* after having served for two years and a half as an *Upasaka* or lay disciple. Minor R. E. II distinctly mentions his reverence for the Buddhist Trinity, i.e. *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Samgha*. There are also other inscriptions like R. E. VII and Pillar Edicts I and II which speak of Asoka's visit to the holy places of Buddhism like *Sambodhi* and *Lumminigama*. He is also credited, according to later

accounts, with having built more than 84,000 Buddhist monasteries in various parts of his empire. Traditionally his name is associated with the Third Buddhist Council which met with the main objective of preventing schism within the Buddhist church.



While there can be no dispute about Asoka's conversion to and faith and zeal for Buddhism, scholars differ in their opinion about the exact nature of *Dhamma* preached by him. It is a striking fact that nowhere in his edicts Asoka refers to the *Arya Satyas*,

the *Astangika Marga* and *Nirvana*. Even if it is possible to trace some similarities between his teachings and the doctrines inculcated in some Buddhist texts, like the *Dhammapada*, on the whole, it appears that Asoka's Dhamma, as publicly proclaimed, did not conform to any sectarian text or texts but was essentially 'a practical code of morals...not based on any special dogma, either metaphysical or theological'. He laid the utmost stress on the virtues of liberality, reverence and truthfulness. He pleaded for non-injury to life, reverence to Brahmanas and Sramanas and 'hearkening to father and mother'. He emphasised the need of cultivating such practical virtues as courtesy to all, irrespective of status and age, and moderation in regard to expenditure and accumulation of wealth. From the above, it will be clear that, while in one set of inscriptions Asoka advocated the acceptance of a creed which was in tune with the teachings of Buddhism, in the majority of his edicts, he preferred to lay stress on virtues which are the common attributes of all religions. A balanced view of Asoka's *Dhamma* is thus summed up by a recent writer in these words:

'He did not see Dhamma as piety resulting from good deeds inspired by formal religious beliefs, but as an attitude of social responsibility. In the past historians have generally interpreted Asoka's *Dhamma* almost as a synonym for Buddhism, suggesting thereby that Asoka was concerned with making Buddhism the state religion. It is doubtful if this was his intention. Dhamma was aimed at building up an attitude of mind in which social responsibility, the behaviour of one person towards another, was considered of great relevance. It was a plea for the recognition of the dignity of man, and for a humanistic spirit in the activities of society.'

Asoka's Missionary Activities: The edicts, engraved on rocks and pillars, are but one item in Asoka's missionary programme. From the point of view of Buddhism, they were not of first-rate importance as the majority of them did not invariably preach the doctrines of the Sakyamuni. For the propagation of the faith to which he had become a convert, Asoka tried other methods. In R. E. IV he informs us that he fostered *Dhamma* among his subjects by showing them the spectacles of the dwellings of the gods, elephants and other representations of divine nature. We are told in R. E. VIII that Asoka gave up *Viharayatras* or pleasure-tours in favour of *Dhammayatras* or religious missions. He did not remain content with personal exertions only. He commanded the *Yutas*, *Rajukas* and *Pradeshikas*

to inculcate *Dhamma*. In the thirteenth year of his consecration he created a new class of officials, known as *Dhamma Mahamatras*, specially entrusted with the establishment and increase of piety (*dhammadhithana* and *dhammavadhi*).

Asoka organised a new set of missions for preaching the gospel beyond India. Bands of missionaries were sent not only to different parts of India and Ceylon, but also to countries in Western Asia, Egypt and even Eastern Europe. R. E. XIII mentions Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Cyrene and Epirus as spheres of his missionary and philanthropic activities.

It is also to be remembered that Asoka, a believer in the 'Sara' or the essence of religion, upheld the policy of religious toleration. In one of his edicts he states: 'He who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others, wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sects, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect.' Though a convert to Buddhism Asoka described himself as a *Devanampiya*, showing that he was not an enemy of the Devas. His toleration in matters of religion is also revealed by the Barabar cave dedications made by him in favour of the Ajivika monks.

In assessing Asoka's work as a missionary it is idle to speculate if he accepted the position of the Head of the Buddhist church; it is equally futile to describe his activity as 'not so much as that of a pious emperor as of an archbishop possessed of exceptional temporal power'. What is important to remember is that his missions were a great civilising force which fastened a bond of unity and friendship between the people of India and those of the neighbouring countries such as did not exist before.

Benevolent Activities: The effect of the change of Asoka's religion was felt at once on his internal policy. He passed orders prohibiting the sacrificial slaughter of animals and the holding of popular festivals attended with animal fights and excessive drinking. His benevolence extended to healing arrangements for men and beasts. He took care to import medicinal herbs from abroad. Alongside of roads he caused trees to be planted and had wells dug at intervals of 26 kilometres. He encouraged acts of charity for the relief of the poor and the distressed and employed officers of superior ranks to organise and supervise public acts of charity.

Foreign Relations: The policy of maintaining friendly relations with foreign countries initiated in the days of the first Maurya and

continued by Bindusara, received a further impetus under Asoka. The Shahbazgarhi text of R. E. XIII refers to 'territories bordering on his dominions, as far away as at the distance of six hundred *Yojanas*, where the *Yavana* king named *Antiyoka* is ruling and where, beyond the kingdom of the said *Antiyoka*, are four other kings named *Turumaya*, *Antikini*, *Maka* and *Alikasundara*'. These foreign potentates have been identified as Antiochus II Theos of Syria (260-246 B.C.), Ptolemy II Philadelphos of Egypt (285-247 B.C.), Antigonus Gonatus of Macedonia (276-239 B.C.), Magas of Cyrene (*c.* 285-258 B.C.) and Alexander of Eprius (*c.* 272-255 B.C.). The missions Asoka claims to have sent to these countries gave the Hellenic world an opportunity to acquaint itself with Indian life and thought, even though doubt can reasonably be entertained about the accuracy of the claim that Buddhism made headway among the Greek inhabitants of Western Asia.

Under Asoka the cultural and religious ties between India and Ceylon grew to be close. According to Buddhist traditions Asoka is said to have sent to the island-kingdom missions under his son(?) Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra, which led to the conversion of a large number of Ceylonese people, including their king, to the faith of the Buddha. The two Ceylonese chronicles, *Mahavamsa* and *Dipavamsa*, also refer to Asoka's missionary activities in *Suvarnabhumi* or lower Burma.

Tibetan traditions maintain that Asoka visited *Khotan*, two centuries and a half after the death of Buddha. There is no corroborative evidence in support of this information which is thus of doubtful value.

Estimate of Asoka: Asoka's name figures in the list of the most illustrious monarchs known to history. To emphasise his place in world history he has been compared to a number of well-known rulers and leaders of men who, in different ways, contributed to the making of history, such as Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Constantine, Caliph Omar, Akbar, Cromwell and Napoleon. But the greatness of Asoka is self-evident; comparisons are hardly needed to emphasise the point. That greatness is derived alike from the grandeur of his outlook and personality as from the glory of his achievements. True, his pacifism has been overstressed, for his idealism was not that of a visionary; his activities reveal that underlying them there was the consciousness of a practical mind. He did nothing that might react unfavourably on the fortunes and strength of the

empire. It is in this realisation of the practical limits of pacifism that his greatness lies. Ikhnaton with whom he has been compared belongs to a sphere far removed from that in which Asoka lived. His zeal for *Ahimsa* and abandonment of military conquests as a policy were never allowed to supersede the duties and responsibilities expected of the head of a mighty empire. In him there was a perfect blend of the king and the missionary. The main thesis of Asoka, based on the concept of peace and harmony, remains to this day unassailable, though up to this moment beyond the range of practical politics. The goal does not lose its importance by the difficulty or even the seeming impossibility of attaining it.

Apart from pacifism, the other attributes of his character and outlook such as his conception of kingly duties, his solicitude for the welfare not only of men but of the entire animate world, not only of those who were his own subjects, but also of people who lived outside of his dominions and the ceaseless efforts towards the fulfilment of his aims—mark him out as a ruler with a singular character to be seldom met with in the whole range of history.

Later Imperial Mauryas

Asoka, according to Buddhist texts, ruled for twenty-seven years. As his accession took place about 273 B.C., his reign may be taken to have ended in 246 B.C. Smith, however, assigns him a reign lasting forty years which ended in about 232 B.C. The subsequent history of the Mauryas under his successors is very inadequately known. This is because a state of disintegration seemed to have set in immediately after Asoka's death. 'His sceptre', it has been said, 'was the bow of Ulysses which could not be drawn by weaker hands.' So long he lived, he maintained his effective hold over the entire empire extending in the north from the foot of the Hindukush to the border of the Tamil country in the south. But the post-Asokan period is a dark chapter in Indian history and no first-rate source-material is available on the period. Pillar Edict VII mentions *Tivara* as a son of Asoka. Three other sons—*Kunala*, *Jalauka* and *Mahendra* (a brother according to some traditions) are known to literature. It appears on the evidence of the *Vayu Purana* that Kunala ruled for eight years, but the extent of his dominions is not indicated therein. Moreover, Jain and Buddhist writers tell us that *Samprati*, the son of Kunala, who was incapable of ruling because of blindness, immediately succeeded Asoka to the throne of Pataliputra.

On the other hand, we learn from Kalhana that Jalauka ruled over Kashmir in the generation after Asoka. Confusion is added by the fact that another prince, *Bandhupalita* by name, is cited as the son of Kunala. There is also another conflicting piece of evidence from an inscription relating to the existence of a Maurya prince named *Dasaratha*, a grandson of Asoka.

Even in the Puranas there is no unanimity regarding the order of succession or even in regard to the names of Asoka's successors. Nor is there, in other available sources, any indication of the extent of the dominions ruled over by them. From what little is available, it is clear that none of his successors ruled over the undivided possessions, and in fact the vast empire had split into a number of independent principalities like Kashmir, Gandhara, Magadha, Ujjain, etc. In the circumstances it appears quite possible that the empire of the Mauryas began to enter a career of steady decline and disintegration. The tenth and the last of the Mauryas was *Brihadratha* who, according to the testimony of Banabhatta, was murdered by his general Pushyamitra. With Brihadratha's death (*c.* 185 B.C.) the historic rule of the Mauryas came to an end within less than half a century of Asoka's death and 137 years since its foundation by Chandragupta Maurya.

Causes of the Downfall and Decline of the Mauryas

The story of the decline of the Maurya Empire has been supposed by several scholars to have started even during the lifetime of Asoka. The decline, according to them, was the inevitable result of Asoka's emphasis on non-violence and his attacks on the priestly classes. So far as the first factor is concerned, there is no evidence whatsoever that Asoka, in his zeal for the ideal of non-violence, had done anything that might have weakened the defences of the empire. There is no evidence that he had reduced the army; evidence is also lacking in support of the claim that he had ruled out the possibility of war under all circumstances. No doubt he advised his successors not to seek new conquests by force, but at the same time he also stated in no uncertain terms that if occasions arose necessitating recourse to arms they should conduct campaigns with moderation, mercy and clemency. The second factor, viz. the alienation of the priestly classes leading to the birth of militant Brahmanical reaction, is supposedly based on the consideration that Asoka had provoked the enmity of Brahmanical vested interests

by prohibition of slaughter of sacrificial animals, suppression of *Samajas* or popular festivals, enforcement of *Danda* and *Vyavaharasamata* at the cost of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the Brahmanas and appointment of a new class of officials, viz. *Dharmamahamatras*, entrusted with supervision of the moral conduct of the people (again an infringement of the Brahmanical rights). The exponents of the theory of Brahmanical reaction have seen in the assassination of Brihadratha by Pushyamitra Sunga 'the hands of the Brahmanas in the great revolution'. But the theory does not recommend itself any longer to the historians of today, since all the premises on which the theory was sought to be built have now been found to rest on inaccurate hypotheses and wrong interpretations. The available sources, on the other hand, distinctly point to the fact that Asoka's policy was consistently one of religious toleration in which discrimination on religious grounds had no place.

The causes of the decline are, therefore, to be sought elsewhere. In an age of slow communication, vastness of dominions is a source of weakness rather than of strength to an empire. The fate of the Maurya Empire was no exception to this rule. In spite of the elaborate administrative machinery set up by the Mauryas, the chances of oppression at the ministerial level could not have been eliminated. The account of the revolt of Taxila reveals that it was due to the oppression by 'the wicked ministers' (*dushtamatyas*). The Mauryan economy also tended to be increasingly unable to meet the growing demands of money for the maintenance of a vast army and an elaborate bureaucracy. The issue of debased coinage in the days of the rule of the later Mauryas is suggestive of the strain on the economic resources of the state.

To these should be added the incapacity and weakness of Asoka's successors. None of them could maintain the integrity of the empire which had become a fast victim to disruptive forces. The *Yavana* invasions referred to by Patanjali accelerated the process till Pushyamitra Sunga gave the *coup de grace* by supplanting the rule of Brihadratha with that of his own.

Appendix I

ASOKA'S INSCRIPTIONS

Asoka's inscriptions may be broadly divided into two classes, viz. those engraved on rocks and those incised on pillars of stone.

Rock Inscriptions

These may be studied under three categories:

(1) *Minor Rock Edicts*: These were the oldest among the Asokan inscriptions. The first is known conveniently as Minor R. E. I. Its copies have been discovered at Bairat (Jaipur), Gavimath (Raichur district, Hyderabad), Gujara (Vindhya Pradesh), Maski (Raichur district), Palkigundu (Raichur district), Rupnath (Jabalpur district) and Sahasram (Shahabad district, Bihar). The second edict known as Minor R. E. II is a continuation of the first. Three of its versions discovered at Brahmagiri, Siddapura and Jatinga-Ramesvara (all in the Chitaldrug district, Mysore) are identical; but slightly different versions have been found at Erraguoli and Rajula-Mandagiri (Andhra Pradesh). At Bairat a third Minor Rock Edict of Asoka was found besides the version of M. R. Edict I referred to above. The stone bearing the third edict is preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. M. R. E. I gives a glimpse into Asoka's career after his conversion while the second edict contains a summary of Dhamma.

(2) *Fourteen Rock Edicts*: A series of Fourteen Rock Edicts of Asoka have been discovered at Erragudi (Kurnool district, Andhra), Girnar near Junagarh (Saurashtra), Kalsi (Dehradun district, U. P.), Manshera (Hazara district, Pakistan), Shahbazgarhi (Peshawar district, Pakistan), Sopara (Thana district, Maharashtra), Dhauli (Puri district, Orissa), Jaugada (near Ganjam, Orissa). These mostly relate to Asoka's conception of kingly duties, governmental functions, and the ethical system.

(3) *Cave Inscriptions*: Three Cave Inscriptions have been traced in the Barabar Hills (north of Gaya in Bihar). These were dedicated by Asoka to the monks belonging to the Ajivika sects.

Pillar Inscriptions

These may conveniently be divided into three distinct categories:

(a) *Minor Pillar Edicts*: Their findspots are Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh), Sarnath (near Banaras, U. P.) and Allahabad. The writing is not satisfactorily preserved and texts have different versions. The

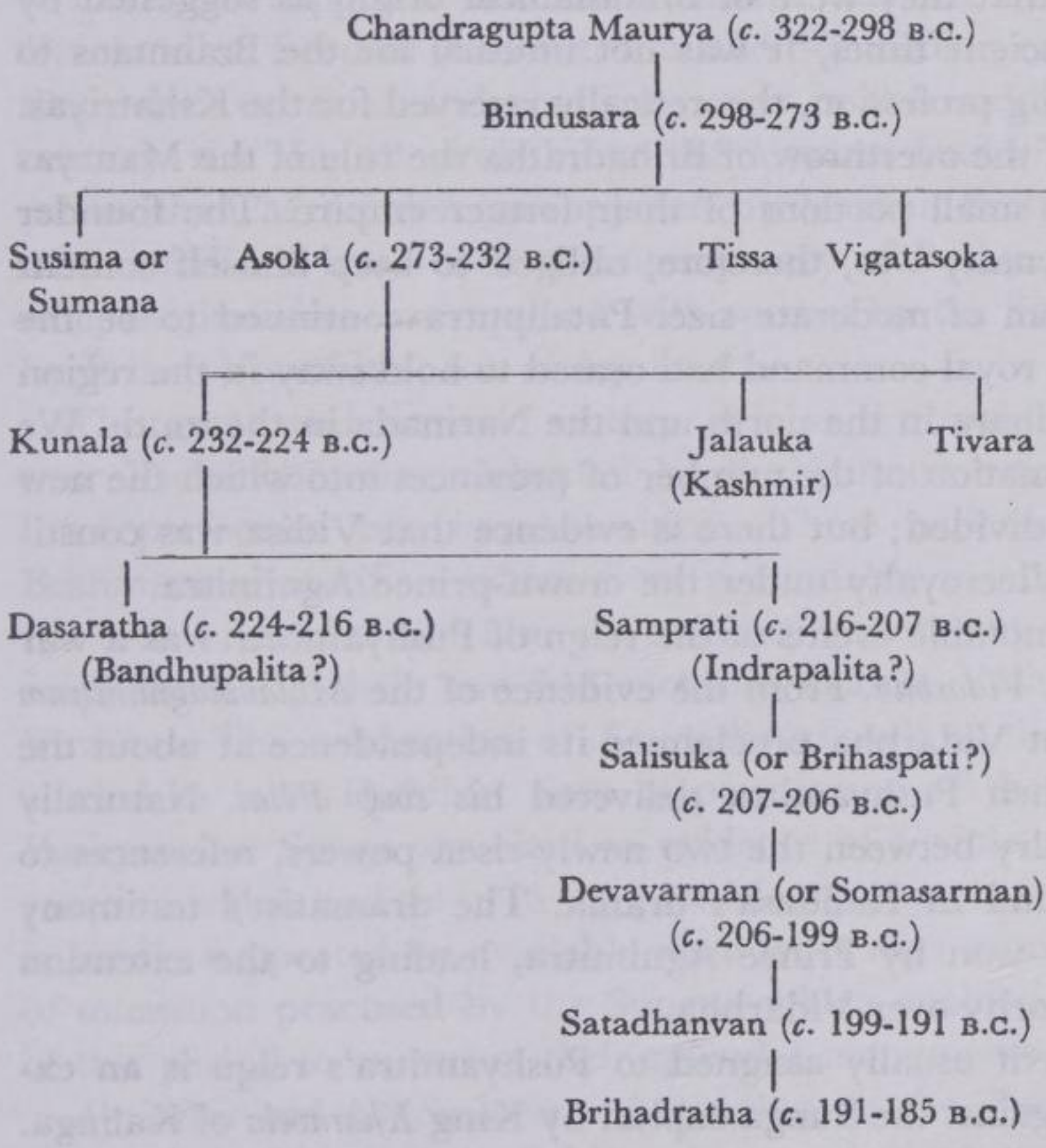
edict discovered in Allahabad is generally known as the Queen's Edict.

(b) *Pillar Inscriptions*: Two Pillar Inscriptions have been discovered at Rummindei (the birth-place of Buddha) and Nigali Sagar, about twenty-one kilometres north-west of Rummindei. They commemorate Asoka's visit to the two holy places for Buddhist pilgrims.

(c) *Pillar Edicts*: Six monolithic pillars were found at Meerut and Allahabad, at Lauriya-Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh and Rampurwa (all situated in the Champaran district of Bihar). Another pillar originally found at Topra is known as the Seventh Pillar Edict. It was later brought to Delhi at the instance of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluk.

APPENDIX II

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE IMPERIAL MAURYAS



CHAPTER FIVE

POST-MAURYAN RULE: PERIOD OF FOREIGN INVASIONS

(*A*) *Magadha in the Post-Mauryan Age*

The grand fabric built up by the genius of the Imperial Mauryas began to reveal unmistakable signs of decline almost immediately after the death of Asoka under whom the Magadhan empire had reached the height of its expansion. Within less than half a century of the death of the Great Monarch the empire of the Mauryas ceased to exist. The *coup de grâce* to the declining empire, as stated in the Puranas and the *Harsha-charita*, was delivered by *Pushyamitra*, the General of the last and tenth Maurya, Brihadratha.

The Sunga Rule: The founder of the Sunga line of Magadhan kings was Pushyamitra. The origin of the Sungas is not known for certain. It is possible that they were of Brahmanical origin as suggested by Panini. In ancient times, it was not unusual for the Brahmans to usurp the ruling profession, theoretically reserved for the Kshatriyas. At the time of the overthrow of Brihadratha the rule of the Mauryas had shrunk to small portions of their former empire. The founder of the new dynasty was, therefore, obliged to keep himself content with a kingdom of moderate size. Pataliputra continued to be the capital but its royal command had ceased to hold sway in the region beyond Jalandhara in the north and the Narmada in the south. We have no information of the number of provinces into which the new kingdom was divided; but there is evidence that Vidisa was constituted into a Viceroyalty under the crown-prince Agnimitra.

One of the notable events of the reign of Pushyamitra was a war waged against *Vidarbha*. From the evidence of the *Malavikagnimitram* it appears that Vidarbha proclaimed its independence at about the same time when Pushyamitra delivered his *coup d'état*. Naturally there was rivalry between the two newly-risen powers, references to which are found in Kalidasa's drama. The dramatist's testimony claims victory won by Prince Agnimitra, leading to the extension of Sunga authority over Vidarbha.

Another event usually assigned to Pushyamitra's reign is an expedition led against the Sunga capital by King *Kharavela* of Kalinga. This is supposedly based on the evidence of the *Hatigumpha Inscription* which contains a recital of the military achievements of the

Kalinga prince. But the information appears to be doubtful, since the reasons on which the identification of *Bahapatimitam* or *Bahasatimitam* mentioned in the inscription with Pushyamitra Sunga rests, are unconvincing, and further because the Magadhan antagonist of Kharavela is definitely described in the inscription as 'Rajagahanapa', while Pushyamitra had his capital in Pataliputra. Moreover, there is independent evidence to show that Kharavela who lived in the first century B.C. could not have been a contemporary of Pushyamitra Sunga.

By far the most serious and important event of Pushyamitra's reign was the *Yavana* invasion from the north-west referred to in two independent sources—Patanjali and Kalidasa. According to the former the Yavanas led an expedition up to Saketa (Ayodhya) and Madhyamika, near Chitor. Kalidasa distinctly speaks of a conflict between the Sungas and the Yavanas on the southern bank of the *Sindhu*. Neither of the sources gives us the name of the invader, but it has been supposed that the invasion was led by the Bactrian Greeks who, freed of the control of the Seleucidian empire, had set themselves up as an independent power in the middle of the third century B.C. In all probability the Yavana leader was *Demetrius* rather than Menander (as supposed by Vincent Smith and others) who could not have been a contemporary of Pushyamitra. At any rate, the invasion was repulsed with success by the Sunga army led by Prince Vasumitra, son of Agnimitra.

The great and decisive victory as also the earlier success won over Vidarbha were celebrated by Pushyamitra who is known to have performed two horse-sacrifices. These indicate a revival of Brahmanical sacrifices which were presumably in abeyance during the rule of Asoka and also the military reputation of the Sungas emphasised by their two-fold victories against Vidarbha and the Yavanas. The celebration of *Asvamedha* as well as the tradition recorded in later Buddhist texts of persecution of the Buddhists by Pushyamitra Sunga are cited as evidence of a violent Brahmanical reaction which had set in in the post-Mauryan period. Such a theory is hardly supported by available records; it runs counter to the fact of toleration practised by the Sungas, which enabled the Buddhists of this period to construct their splendid monuments at Bharhut.

Agnimitra and his Successors: According to the Puranas, Pushyamitra died after a reign of thirty-six years and was succeeded by his son Agnimitra (*c.* 149 B.C.). The latter had already distinguished

himself as the viceroy of Vidisha during his father's lifetime and had won celebrity by his victory over Vidarbha. His exploits are recalled in Kalidasa's drama, *Malavikagnimitram*. Several coins have been discovered in Rohilkhand area, bearing the names of Agnimitra and Jethamitra. It has been suggested by several scholars that the Sunga kings, Agnimitra and his successors, and not the rulers of a local dynasty of North Panchala, as originally suggested by Cunningham, issued these coins. Nothing definite or in detail is known about Agnimitra's successors, except that *Vasumitra*, as a crown-prince, had proved his military talents by repulsing the Yavana invasion of the days of his grandfather.

Another interesting name in the list of later Sungas is that of Maharaja *Bhagavata* also known as *Bhagabhadra*. We know from the Besnagar Inscription that *Heliodoros*, who came to the court of Bhagabhadra at Vidisha as an envoy from Antialkidas, the Greek king of Takshila, embraced Vaishnavism and even raised a *Garuda* column in commemoration of his adoption of new religion.

The tenth and the last Sunga monarch was *Devabhuti* or *Devabhumi*. He is described in the Puranas as a young and dissolute prince who was overthrown by his amatya *Vasudeva*. The manner in which the Sunga rule was ended was not dissimilar to the manner by which it had grasped power a little over a century ago.

The Puranas assign a total period of 112 years to Sunga rule which thus may be said to have ended (except in some outlying areas in Central India) in 73 B.C.

The Kanvas: The founder of the Kanva or Kanvayana line of kings was *Vasudeva* who formerly served as an amatya of the last Sunga monarch. Nothing is known about the new line of rulers except in barest outlines. According to the Puranas, the Kanva line consisted of four rulers—*Vasudeva*, *Bhumimitra*, *Narayana* and *Susarman* with a total reign period of forty-five years. This suggests that the Kanvas failed to strike deep roots. It is almost certain that by the time the new dynasty was founded, the Sunga dominions had considerably shrunk in extent. Even then the Kanvas could not establish their control over the truncated dominions of the Sungas. There is evidence that even after Vasudeva had obtained the throne, Sunga rule survived in parts of Central India.

According to the calculation recorded in the Puranas, the Kanva rule came to an end in 28 B.C., being supplanted by *Simuka* or *Sipraka*, the founder of the Andhra or Andhrabhritya line of rulers. From the

advent of the Andhras, Magadha lost its claim to pre-eminence and entered upon a state of obscurity from which it was not destined to recover till the rise of the Guptas in the first quarter of the fourth century A.D.

(B) Era of Foreign Invasions

The great work of Chandragupta Maurya, viz. the linking up of North-West and Northern India into a single, close-knit political unit under the auspices of a common political authority did not survive long after the death of his grandson. Almost immediately after the death of Asoka, North-West India, with her links with the rest of India sapped, lapsed back into a state of disunion. This opened up the prospect of a renewed phase of foreign invasions. We learn from *Polybius* that the Syrian monarch *Antiochus the Great* 'crossed the Caucasus and descended into India; renewed his friendship with *Sophagasenuos*, the king of the Indians'. The last-named ruler has been identified with *Subhagasena* who ruled over the kingdom of Gandhara. It is evident that he failed to resist the invaders and thought it discreet to 'renew friendship' (206 B.C.).

Bactrian Invasions: The Syrian invasion of 206 B.C. led by Antiochus the Great was a prelude to further foreign inroads into India. Among these foreigners the foremost were the Bactrians. About the middle of the third century B.C. they seceded from the Seleucidian empire and proclaimed independence. The state of disunion in which North-West India then stood, as revealed in course of the Syrian invasion of 206 B.C., encouraged the Bactrian monarchs to seek expansion inside the N.-W. frontiers of India. One of the earlier Bactrian kings, *Demetrius I*, is credited with the conquest of large areas in Afghanistan and Makran. Another monarch of the same name, known as *Demetrius II*, crossed into the interior, reached the Indus Valley and brought extensive areas in N.-W. India under his rule. He has been identified as the leader of the *Yavana* invasion referred to by Patanjali, supposed to have taken place in the days of Pushyamitra Sunga. The successes won by Demetrius II in India were, however, balanced by losses suffered in Bactria where a rival Greek leader, named *Eukratides*, set up his rule. Demetrius could not recover Bactria and had to remain content with his Indian possessions. He has been identified by some scholars with King *Dattamitra* mentioned in the *Mahabharata*.

Another Indo-Greek ruler, *Menander*, has won celebrity in Indian

history as the author of *Milindapanha* and for his patronage of Buddhism. He was also a vigorous conqueror and was responsible for the extension of Indo-Greek rule over the Swat Valley, the Hazara district and portions of the Punjab. Strabo claims that Menander 'conquered more nations than Alexander'.

In spite of spectacular success as claimed on behalf of individuals like Demetrius and Menander, it is, on the whole, difficult to reconstruct the history of the Bactrian rule in India in any satisfactory manner. The evidence, available so far, is mostly numismatic. But the coins hardly throw light on the identification of the kings as in several cases the same name is given to more than one ruler and it is not easy to say to which particular ruler the coins exactly refer. An element of confusion is further introduced by the fact that the rival families often contended for power, as a result of which political stability suffered. In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that the Bactrian hold on the conquered Indian territories did not last long. The last Bactrian ruler was *Heliokles*. His death (*c.* 130 B.C.) was followed by the usurpation of Bactria by the *Sakas*. The house of *Eukratides*, however, continued to rule in portions of Afghanistan and Western Punjab. A prince of this house, *Antialkidas*, is known to have sent an envoy (Heliodoros) to the court of the Sunga monarch, *Bhagabhadra* (or *Bhagavata*) whose conversion to Vaishnavism is commemorated in the famous Besnagar Pillar Inscription. The last Greek ruler of the North-West Frontier, *Hermaeus*, was overthrown by the Kushan chief *Kadphises I* in the first half of the first century A.D.

The Sakas: The Sakas, a nomadic people, originally belonged to the region of Central Asia lying to the north of the river Syr Darya from where they were later compelled to move southward due to the pressure of Yueh-chi exodus. They overthrew Bactria and Parthia before they moved further south and arrived on the Indian scene through Kapisa-Gandhara region. For some time their progress was checked by the house of Eukratides; but the subsequent decline of this house removed the barriers to Saka advance, and before long the Sakas succeeded in setting up several principalities in the lower Indus Valley and as far as Mathura.

The earliest Saka king known to have ruled in India and mentioned in Indian inscriptions was *Maues* or *Moga* (*c.* 80 B.C.). His authority was acknowledged over Gandhara and western Punjab. His successor (probably his son-in-law) *Azes* extended Saka power

and prestige by exterminating the independent rule of the house of Euthydemos in eastern Punjab. In some of his coins the name of Azes appears with that of *Azilises*. This has led some scholars to believe that the two were joint rulers—a system widely in practice among the Scythians.

Traces of Saka rule have also been discovered in western and southern India. These rulers were known as *Kshaharatas* or *Satraps*. The first Saka satrap in western India was *Bhumaka* who ruled in Saurashtra. The greatest and the most powerful among the Saka satraps of western India was *Nahapana*, whose rule extended over the entire region of Maharashtra, Surparaka (north Konkan), Kathiawar, Mandasor and Puskara in Ajmir. At a later stage there ensued a great rivalry between Nahapana and the famous Satavahana ruler, Gautamiputra Satakarni, who is credited with having considerably curbed the territorial limits of Nahapana's authority.

Among the satraps of Mathura the most well-known was *Ranjubula* or *Rajuvula* mentioned both in coins and inscriptions. He was probably responsible for the overthrow of Greek rule in eastern Punjab. The absence of any title indicative of subordinate rank has led scholars to believe that Ranjubula and his successor Sondasa 'probably ruled the easternmost province of the Saka Empire as semi-independent chiefs'.

In western India the main centre of Saka power was *Ujjain*. Its founder was *Chashtana* but the most celebrated name in the list of Ujjain satraps was *Rudradaman*. The Junagadh Rock Inscription dated 150 A.D., described as 'among the earliest certainly dated records of ancient India', contains a detailed recital of his achievements. These concerned, among others, the adoption of the title of *Mahakshatrapa* by 'exercise of his own rights'. He probably recovered some of the territories lost previously to Gautamiputra Satakarni. Available evidence points to the prevalence of his authority over Malwa, northern Gujarat, Kathiawar, Marwar, the lower Indus Valley and northern Konkan. He is also credited with victory won against the *Yaudheyas* who ruled over the banks of the Sutlej and some parts of Rajasthan. The inscription also records the interesting information that Rudradaman constructed a great artificial lake at Girnar known as the *Sudarshana Lake*.

The success of Rudradaman, no doubt due mainly to his own abilities, was largely facilitated by the decline in the fortunes of the Kushanas. His successors were, however, unable to retain the primacy

earned by their illustrious predecessor. The exact manner in which their final downfall came about is not known, but it appears that since the death of Rudradaman the fortunes of the family were steadily on the decline, with the possible exception of the brief interlude of the reign of Rudrasena III, till the process was completed by the military exploits of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya in the concluding years of the fourth century A.D.

Parthian Rule: Parthia seceded from the Syrian Empire at the same time that Bactria emerged as an independent kingdom. Like the Bactrians, the Parthians too sought expansion in the Indian mainland. The first Parthian ruler known to have conquered a part of Bactria and even to have penetrated into India was *Mithradates*. Towards the middle of the first century A.D. they extended their authority over portions of Gandhara by overthrowing the rule of the Sakas. We learn from Orosius, a Roman historian of the fifth century A.D., that the Parthian king subjugated the region between the Hydaspes and the Indus.

The most celebrated among the Indo-Parthian rulers was *Gondopharnes* who probably belonged to the second quarter of the first century A.D. His authority was acknowledged over extensive areas including southern Afghanistan, Peshawar, eastern Gandhara and the lower Indus Valley. Some scholars credit Gondopharnes with the conquest of the Kabul Valley after expelling therefrom the last Greek prince Hermaeus. If traditional Christian accounts are to be believed, the great Parthian ruler was converted to Christianity by the Apostle St. Thomas. It is not possible to summarily dismiss the tradition as unhistorical when one takes into consideration the fairly wide prevalence of Christianity in the Malabar region with which the Apostle is traditionally associated.

Gondopharnes, however, did not build to last. The forces of disintegration seem to have set in immediately after his death. We have epigraphic evidence which proves that the Parthian rule was supplanted in Afghanistan, the Punjab and Sind by the Kushanas (a branch of the Yueh-chis), destined to build the largest empire presided over by any foreign people in ancient India.

Rise of the Yueh-chis: The Yueh-chis originally dwelt in north-western China. At about 165 B.C. they were forced to leave their original homeland owing to the enmity of a nomadic people, known as the *Hiung-nu* (Huns). Unable to hold their ground the Yueh-chis moved in a westward direction. In course of their march they came

into conflict with yet another enemy, namely the *Sakas*. Here fortune favoured them. They won initial successes against the Sakas and drove them into Bactria. At a later stage, as recorded in Chinese sources, the five tribes (the *Koneichouang* or the *Kushanas* being the leading among them) into which these people were divided were united by the efforts of the Yueh-chi chief *Kujala Kadphises* or *Kadphises I*. He led them across the northern mountains, overthrew the Greek rule in Kabul and Kashmir and paved the way for the extension of Yueh-chi authority in the mainland of India.

Kujala Kadphises died at the advanced age of eighty and was succeeded by his son *Wema* (or Vima) Kadphises, popularly known as Kadphises II. His coins have been traced in different parts of Northern India, and on the basis of their evidence, it has been supposed that his authority extended as far as Uttar Pradesh of today. But he did not rule the Indian provinces directly; these were administered on his behalf by his viceroys. Unlike his father, Wema assumed titles and styles indicative of sovereign power—'The Great King, King of kings, the Great Lord'. From the legends and figures engraved on his coins it appears that he had become a convert to the Saiva faith.

The greatest among the Kushan Emperors was *Kaniska*, whose relations with the two Kadphises is not, however, known for certain. The date of Kaniska's accession has long been a subject of controversy. Dates varying between B.C. 58 and A.D. 248-49 have been suggested as marking the commencement of his reign. Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri has adduced good reasons for preferring 78 A.D. (also earlier suggested by Fergusson, Oldenberg, Thomas, Banerjee and Rapson) which saw the inauguration of the *Saka Era*, to other dates suggested for Kaniska's accession. In his view the Saka Era was the only era started by a foreigner and Kaniska was the only foreigner known to have inaugurated an era. This date also fits in with archaeological evidence which shows that the remains of Kaniska's time belonged to an era later in date compared to the relics of the Kadphises group.

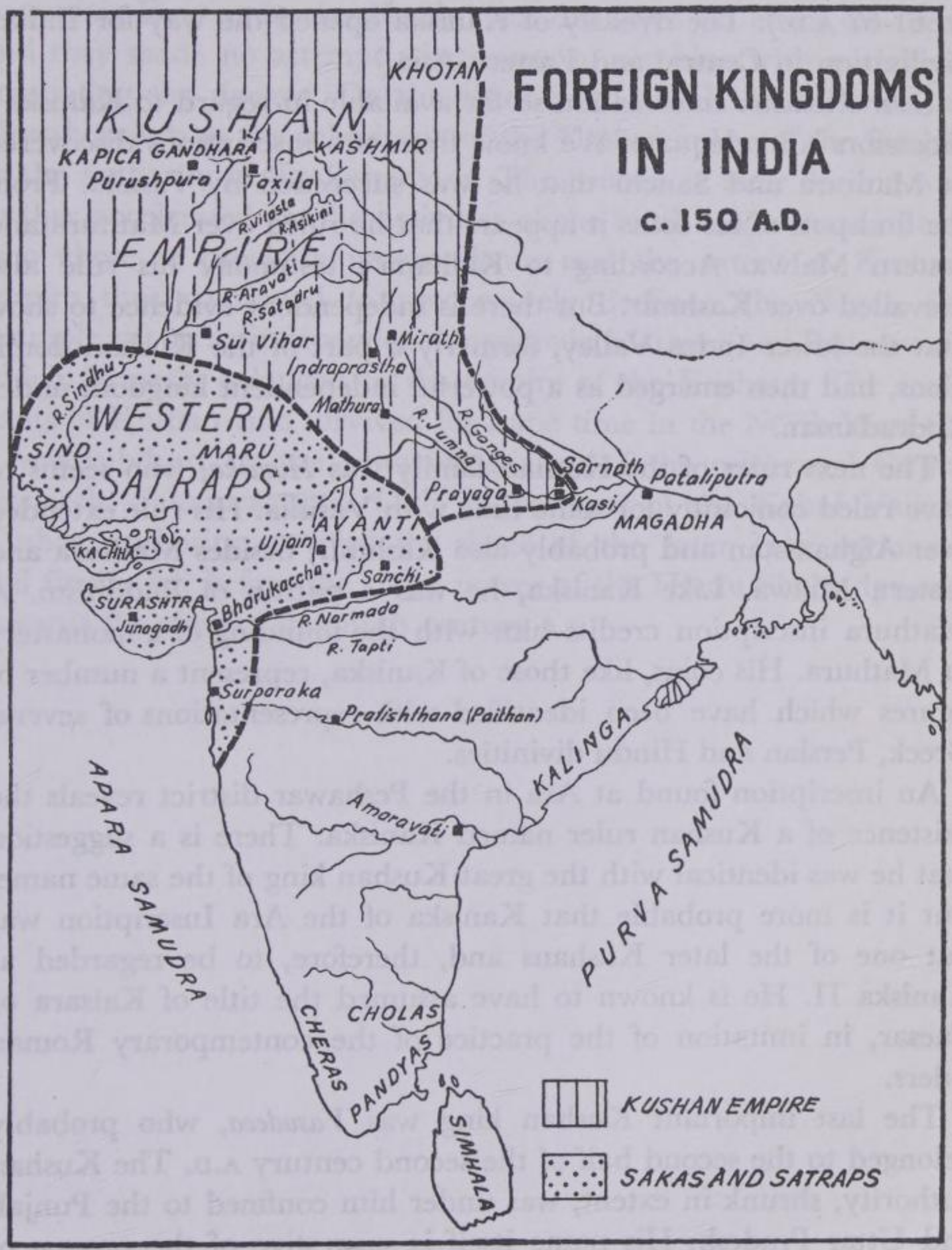
Chinese, Tibetan and Indian sources alike bear testimony to wide conquests effected by Kaniska. While Chinese and Tibetan writers refer to his conflict with the rulers of Eastern India, Indian coins and epigraphs affirm the inclusion of Peshawar, Kashmir, Rawalpindi, Mathura, Sravasti, Gorakhpur and Banaras within his expanding dominions. After having consolidated his conquests in

India, Kaniska is said to have defeated the king of the Parthians. He made substantial additions to his Indian dominions by conquering vast possessions in Central Asia—notably Kashgar, Khotan and Yarkand. He is also known to have baffled all attempts to recover their lost possessions in Central Asia. Hiuen Tsang claims that Kaniska detained a Chinese prince as a hostage in his court. According to Chinese sources, later in life Kaniska led an expedition in the north and 'died in an attempt to cross the Tsunglung mountains between Gandhara and Khotan'. Hiuen Tsang further informs us that Purushapura or Peshawar was the capital city from which Kaniska exercised his suzerainty over an empire which extended from the border of the Gobi desert to the city of Banaras in the east.

Kaniska's fame is not derived so much from his conquest as from his patronage of religion and arts. Buddhist traditions testify to his liberal patronage to the Buddhist faith. Coins as well as inscriptions show that he had become a convert to the religion of *Sakyamuni*. As a mark of the adoption of the new faith Kaniska caused the famous *Samgharam* and the relic tower to be constructed at Purushapura (or Peshawar). His name is associated in northern Buddhist traditions with the convocation of the Fourth Buddhist Council which met at Kashmir (or Jullunder) and gave its seal of assent to the *Mahayana* doctrines. Under his patronage Buddhism, as preached by the *Mahayana* school, made considerable progress in Central Asia and the Far East. This was facilitated by the geographical contiguity between Kaniska's dominions and the Central Asian countries. Like Asoka, Kaniska, after adoption of Buddhism, did not give up his veneration for the old divinities like Greek, Sumerian, Persian and Hindu gods formerly worshipped by him.

Though a foreigner, Kaniska proved himself to be a liberal patron of Indian arts and letters. Well-known and reputed scholars like Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Parsva, Vasumitra and Charaka are known to have adorned his court. Architecture and sculpture also made considerable progress under his patronage. Apart from the relic tower and monastery built at Purushapura, which excited the wonder and admiration of successive foreign travellers to India till the days of Alberuni, other notable examples of artistic achievements are provided by the statue discovered at Mat near Mathura and by the products of the famous Gandhara School of arts whose characteristic feature was the application of Hellenic form and technique to Indian theme, specially concerned with Mahayana Buddhism.

The reign of Kaniska thus constituted one of the most important epochs in the history of ancient India. Politically, it linked up India with Central Asia in a manner not known before. It also saw the transference of the centre of political gravity from Eastern to North-West India, from Magadha to Purushapura. Culturally, it illustrated the remarkable extent to which these foreigners identified themselves with the cultural life and pattern of India. From the religious point of view, it saw the transformation of Buddhism marked by



the ascendancy of the *Mahayana* school and its spread to centres in Central Asian and Far Eastern countries. As the author of the *Political History of Ancient India* observes: 'That the Kushana age was a period of great literary activity is proved by the works of Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna and others. It was also a period of religious ferment and missionary activity. It witnessed the development of Saivism and the allied cult of Kartikeya, of the Mahayana form of Buddhism and the cults of Mihira and Vasudeva Krishna, and it saw the introduction of Buddhism into China by Kasyapa Matanga (*c.* 61-67 A.D.). The dynasty of Kaniska opened the way for Indian civilisation to Central and Eastern Asia.'

Later Kushans: Information so far available in regard to Kaniska's successors is inadequate. We know from two inscriptions discovered at Mathura and Sanchi that he was succeeded by *Vasiska*. From the findspots of his coins it appears that he ruled over Mathura and eastern Malwa. According to Kalhana's testimony his rule also prevailed over Kashmir. But there is independent evidence to show that the lower Indus Valley, formerly a part of the Kushan dominions, had then emerged as a powerful independent kingdom under Rudradaman.

The next ruler of the Kushan family was *Huviska*, who seems to have ruled conjointly for some time with Vasiska. His rule extended over Afghanistan and probably also Kashmir, besides Mathura and eastern Malwa. Like Kaniska, he was a patron of Buddhism. A Mathura inscription credits him with the founding of a monastery in Mathura. His coins, like those of Kaniska, represent a number of figures which have been identified with representations of several Greek, Persian and Hindu divinities.

An inscription found at Ara in the Peshawar district reveals the existence of a Kushan ruler named Kaniska. There is a suggestion that he was identical with the great Kushan king of the same name. But it is more probable that Kaniska of the Ara Inscription was but one of the later Kushans and, therefore, to be regarded as Kaniska II. He is known to have assumed the title of Kaisara or Caesar, in imitation of the practice of the contemporary Roman rulers.

The last important Kushan king was *Vasudeva*, who probably belonged to the second half of the second century A.D. The Kushan authority, shrunk in extent, was under him confined to the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. His name itself is suggestive of the process of

Indianisation of this foreign royal family. Like Kadphises I, he was a worshipper of Siva. His coin types represent the figure of Siva with his bull and the host of non-Indian divinities are conspicuously absent.

Fall of the Kushans: By the third century A.D. the great Kushan empire had become split into a number of petty principalities mostly ruled over by a group of weak and incompetent rulers. It is impossible to trace their activities or their history in any intelligible manner. It is, however, evident that the menacing growth of the Sassanian Empire in the North-West did have no effect on them and they made no attempt whatsoever to combine with a view to combating the danger. On the other hand, available evidence indirectly points to the submission of the Kushan rulers of the Punjab to the authority of the Sassanians. The process of their decline was further accelerated by the activities of the local subordinate rulers, who chose to proclaim independence and the extent of Kushan empire thus continued to progressively decline. The Nagas, for example, set up an independent kingdom in Mathura and Padmavati, which formerly belonged to the empire of the Kushans. The remnants of Kushan rule survived for some time in the North-West till it was subdued by the conquering arms of the celebrated Gupta monarch, Samudragupta. Only in portions of the Kabul Valley, Kushan authority survived the shock of the later Hun invasions and finally fell before the rising power of the Hindu Shahi dynasty towards the close of the ninth century A.D.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DECCAN KINGDOMS

While North-Western and North India since post-Mauryan times and specially after the fall of the Sungas was fast becoming a prey to disunity and was gradually being parcelled out into a number of independent units ruled over by foreign dynasties, the Deccan presented a different spectacle where the forces of unity and stability were at work and made possible the advent of powerful kingdoms.

The Chetas (or *Chetis*) *of Kalinga*: In ancient times Kalinga was not merely co-extensive with Ganjam, Puri and Cuttack districts of modern Orissa, but also included considerable portions of the Telugu-speaking area of trans-Vindhyan India. It is evident that Kalinga seceded from the Maurya Empire in the years following the death of Asoka, though its history is not known with any degree of certainty till the first century B.C. The veil of obscurity is lifted by the far-famed but damaged Hatigumpha (in the Udaygiri hill near Bhubaneswar) Inscription. It records the exploits of *Kharavela*, belonging to the Cheta or Cheti line of kings, founded by Maha Meghavahana. According to the testimony of the inscription, Kharavela, aged 24, ascended the throne of Kalinga after having served apprenticeship as *Yuvaraja* for eight years. At accession he assumed the title of *Kalingadhipati* or *Kalinga Chakravartin* as a mark of his paramountcy. The inscription describes in detail the *digvijaya* of the Kalinga prince and credits him with having sent his army as far south as the Krishna. Whether he fought against Satakarni, Lord of the Deccan, remains still undecided, but the fact of his successful encounter with the *Rashtrikas* and *Bhojakas* of the Berar region is beyond dispute. He is also credited with having led two successive expeditions against the ruler of Rajagriha. The suggestion offered by some scholars that the Magadhan antagonist of Kharavela was Pushyamitra Sunga does not appear to be tenable since the grounds on which Bahapatimita or Bahasatimita occurring in the inscription is identified with Pushyamitra Sunga are unconvincing and further because Pushyamitra, who ruled over Magadha with its capital at Pataliputra, could not have been the *Rajagrahanapa* referred to in the inscription. Moreover, there are good reasons for believing that Pushyamitra lived at least a century and a half before Kharavela. A further claim is recorded in the inscription to the effect that the news of his victorious

campaigns caused such a panic in the minds of a Yavana ruler that he chose to avoid conflict by a flight to Mathura. The name 'Dimita' or 'Dimata' occurring in the inscription is supposed by some to stand for Demitrius. This is at best a conjecture. In the eleventh year of his reign Kharavela is stated to have led his armies as far south as the Pandya kingdom and received from its ruler a token of submission.

Kharavela's achievements were not confined to military exploits only. The Hatigumpha Inscription claims that in the fifth year of his reign, he repaired and enlarged a canal originally constructed by Nandaraja, who has been generally identified with Mahapadma Nanda. His solicitude for the welfare of his subjects is also borne out by remission of taxes.

Not only is it difficult to determine the extent of Kharavela's conquests with any degree of precision, his date too is a subject of controversy among scholars. K. P. Jayaswal and Sten Konow have assigned him to the first half of the second century B.C., while H. C. Raychaudhuri and R. P. Chanda are inclined to the view that he flourished in the last quarter of the first century B.C. The uncertainty is due to the fact that the Hatigumpha Inscription does not bear any date. What is, however, certain is that 'on palaeographic grounds the inscription cannot be placed earlier than the beginning of the second century B.C. and not later than the first century B.C.'

Kharavela was a follower of Jainism. His patronage towards the Jain monks and establishments was of a very liberal kind. He caused a large number of residential chambers and a commodious hall to be constructed on the top of the Udaygiri hill for the use of the Jain ascetics. He is also known to have brought back an image of the Jain Tirthankara carried away earlier by the Magadhan king, Nandaraja. But he was not a bigot and was known to have extended toleration to all classes of his subjects, irrespective of their religious faiths.

The career of Kharavela, though brilliant, was meteoric. There are obvious elements of exaggeration in the epigraphic record of his military achievements but it can hardly be denied that Kalinga under him was one of the most powerful kingdoms in the eastern region. Unfortunately, shortly after the death of the great monarch the kingdom lost its importance and was split into a number of weak and small units.

The Satavahanas of Pratisthana: While Northern India was the scene

of contention between the later Sungas and the Kanvas, in India, south of the Vindhyas, the foundations of a great and mighty empire were being laid by the Satavahanas.

The founder of the Satavahana (also known as *Andhra* or *Andhra-bhritya*) power was *Simuka*, according to epigraphic records; the Puranas give such variants of his name as *Sisuka*, *Sipraka*, *Sindhuka*, etc. The Puranic statement that the Andhra Simuka assailed the Kanvayana and Susarman, and destroyed the remnants of Sunga power and 'obtained this earth' has led scholars to accept that Simuka belonged to the first century B.C. The contrary view, also based on Puranic evidence (according to which the Andhras ruled for four centuries and a half), that the dynasty came into power in the third century B.C. does not appear to be tenable on the grounds that there is no unanimity even in the Puranic texts that the total period of reign of the Andhra rulers lasted for four centuries and a half and there is reliable evidence which shows that one of the early Satavahana rulers, Sri Satakarni, was a contemporary of Kharavela who, in all probability, belonged to the first century B.C.

There is also difference of opinion among historians about the original homeland of the Andhras or Satavahanas. While some regard modern Bellary district as the original home of the Satavahanas, others are inclined to accept the land immediately south of the *Madhyadesha* as the area to which they originally belonged.

An element of uncertainty about the origin of the Satavahanas has been introduced by the Puranic statement describing them as *Andhras* or *Andhrabhrityas*. The Andhras were no doubt an ancient people. They are mentioned in such ancient records as the *Aitareya Brahmana*, *Indica* of Megasthenes and Asokan Edicts. The word 'Satavahana' was but the name of a family and the clan to which it belonged might have been that of the Andhras; for in most of the Puranas the first Satavahana ruler is described as *Andhra-Jatiya*. But opinion on this point is not unanimous. It has been supposed that 'the name Andhra probably came to be applied to the kings in later times when they lost their northern and western possessions and became a purely Andhra power governing the territory at the mouth of the river Krishna.' The phrase *Andhrabhritya* has been interpreted in more than one way. It means, according to some, *bhrityas* or servants of the Andhras; according to others, 'the Andhras were originally servants of some other power such as the Maurya or the Sunga.'

The founder of the Satavahana rule, *Simuka*, ruled over an area around Vidisa and portions of Dakshinapatha, but indication is lacking that Magadha came under his authority. It is not improbable that he began his career as a feudatory under the Kanvas whose rule in the days of its decline he challenged and overthrew.

Simuka's successor was *Krishna*, of whom nothing is known except that he ruled for eighteen years. The next ruler was *Sri Satakarni*, who made substantial additions to the ancestral kingdom by a policy of expansion through military exploits. He defied the attempts of Kharavela to extend the boundaries of the Kalinga kingdom at the expense of Satavahana territories. He took under his protection Eastern Malwa, then threatened by the Sakas and the Greeks. There is evidence that he carried his victorious arms as far as the Godavari Valley. His authority was acknowledged over vast areas of upper Deccan, Central and Western India, with Pratisthana or Paithan on the Godavari as its capital. The *Nanaghat Inscription* of his queen Nayanika mentions the performance by her royal husband, described as '*Dakshinapatha-pati*' (or Lord of the Deccan), of one *Rajasuya* and two *Asvamedhas*. He thus raised the prestige and power of the Satavahana regime in the Deccan to a height equalled by that of the Sungas in Northern India.

Satakarni's sons, *Vedasri* and *Saktisri*, being minors at their father's death, could not personally hold the reins of government and the Queen-mother Nayanika was called upon to act as Regent. But since the beginning of the first century A.D. the power of the Satavahanas was in a state of temporary eclipse, due to the continuous incursions of the Sakas. The latter wrested from the successors of Sri Satakarni Maharashtra and the adjoining areas. From this state of decline the fortunes of the Satavahanas were rescued by *Gautamiputra Satakarni*, who belonged to the first half of the second century A.D. Epigraphic records not only refer to the recovery of Maharashtra from the yoke of the Sakas, but also to victories won over the Yavanas and Palhavas and the extension of Satavahana authority over *Asmaka* on the Godavari, *Suratha* (Kathiawar), *Kukura* (in Gujarat-Kathiawar region), *Aparanta* (North Konkan), *Anupa* (district around Mahismati on the Narmada), *Vidarbha* (Berar), *Akara* (Eastern Malwa) and *Avanti* (Western Malwa). From the evidence of inscriptions it appears that Gautamiputra's authority directly extended over the entire region from Kathiawar in the north to Krishna in the south and from Konkan in the west to Berar in the east. Besides

this, under Gautamiputra the suzerain authority of the Satavahanas was acknowledged in extensive areas of trans-Vindhyan India. But it also appears that Gautamiputra was not able to retain his hold for long over the vast dominions he had earlier recovered or conquered. Malwa, for example, fell before an attack of the Scythian people, known as the *Kardamakas*.

Gautamiputra was not only a great conqueror; he was also a benevolent ruler, a 'unique Brahmana' who is said to have 'crushed the pride and conceit of the Kshatriyas, furthered the interest of the Dvijas and Kutubas (agriculturists) and stopped the contamination of the four Varnas'.

Gautamiputra's successor was his son *Vasishthaputra Pulumayi* (Siro Polemacios of Ptolemy). While the father took pride as an upholder of the purity of the four Varnas, his son thought it discreet to enter into matrimonial relations with the powerful Sakas by marrying a daughter of Rudradaman. This lessened the enmity between the two neighbouring powers but failed to eliminate it completely. Rudradaman thus claims to have twice defeated the Lord of the Deccan in fair fight, but 'did not destroy on account of the nearness of their relations'. In spite, however, of reverses at the hands of Rudradaman, Vasishthaputra was able to push his conquests, for the first time in the history of the Satavahanas, over the Andhra country (i.e. the region between the Godavari and the Krishna).

The next and, in fact, the last important ruler of the dynasty was *Yajnasri Satakarni* (*c.* 165-194 A.D.). From the findspots of his coins it has been supposed that he ruled over Maharashtra and Andhra. It is probable that he recovered North Konkan from the successors of Rudradaman. From the figures and legends of some of his coins it has been supposed that his power also extended over the sea.

Fall of the Satavahanas: The death of Yajnasri Satakarni marked the beginning of the decline of the Satavahanas. The story of the decline is, however, known only in broad outlines. It appears that the *Abhiras* wrested from them the possession of Maharashtra about the middle of the third century A.D. In some portions of Eastern Deccan and Kuntala or the Kanarese country Satavahana rule survived for some time till it was supplanted by the rising power of the *Vakatakas*, the *Ikshakus* and the *Pallavas*.

The Vakatakas of the Deccan and Central Inaia: The nucleus of Vakataka power was Bundelkhand. They rose into prominence in the period of the decline of the Satavahanas. The founder of the Vakataka royal

power was *Vindhyasakti*, who was probably a feudatory of the later Satavahanas of Vidarbha. Towards the close of the third century A.D. he set himself up as an independent ruler in the region of Vidisa. His son *Pravarasena I* made considerable additions to the ancestral dominions and as a mark of his enhanced authority performed a number of *Asvamedha* and *Rajasuya* sacrifices. He is also reputed as a great champion of the Brahmanical religion. He strengthened his position by wars as well as by diplomacy. By a singular stroke of far-sightedness he concluded a matrimonial alliance with the Nagas of the Bharasiva family of Central Asia. This helped him, to a large extent, in extending his authority over the extensive area from Bundelkhand in the north to Hyderabad in the south. Later in the fourth century A.D., with the rise of the second Magadhan Empire under the Guptas, the Vakatakas played an important role in the conflict between the Guptas of Magadha and the Sakas of Western India and contributed to the success of the former at the expense of the latter. The marriage between the daughter of Chandragupta Vikramaditya II and the Vakataka King Rudrasena II was of considerable help in effecting the expansion of Gupta authority in Western India as far as the coast of the Arabian Sea. The last important king of the Vakataka dynasty was *Harisena*, who belonged to the close of the fifth century A.D. His authority is believed to have extended over Malwa, Kalinga, South Kosala, South Gujarat, Andhra and the Kanarese country. His successors were, however, unable to maintain the integrity of the Vakataka kingdom which fell a victim to the attacks of the Kalachuris and the Kadambas towards the middle of the sixth century A.D.

The Far South: Here flourished the three ancient kingdoms of the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Cheras, occupying what was known as *Tamilakam* or the Tamil realm. The Aryan influence did not penetrate to this distant region till the fourth century B.C., but our knowledge of the country and its people belonging to the pre-Christian era is meagre and indirect. The ancient literature of the Tamils, known as the Sangam literature, is no doubt massive, but it hardly fulfils the demands of history and chronology.

The homeland of the *Cholas* was the Kavery delta and the adjoining region of modern Tanjore and Trichinopoly. They were the first to acquire ascendancy in the Far South. One of their early kings, Karikala (*c.* 190 A.D.), who figures very prominently in ancient literature, is credited with victories over the rulers of the neighbouring

Pandya and *Chera* kingdoms and is believed to have even extended his authority over Ceylon. He was also a great patron of irrigation activities and one of his grand schemes was the construction of canals with a view to diffusing the water-resources of the Kavery to the various parts of his kingdom not directly served by the river system. Interesting glimpses into the history of the Chola kingdom are also afforded by the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* and the accounts of Ptolemy. Towards the beginning of the fourth century A.D. the power of the Cholas began to decline mainly because of the rise of Pallavas on the one hand and the continuous wars waged by the Pandyas and the Cheras on the other.

The ancient kingdom of the *Pandyas* with its capital at Madurai comprised the modern districts of Madura, Ramnad, Tinnevelly and the southern parts of Travancore. References to the Pandyas occur in ancient literary works like the *Mahabharata* and the *Jatakas* as well as in *Indica* of Megasthenes. The last-named source gives us the curious information that the kingdom was founded by *Pandaia*, a daughter of Heracles, and that it was ruled by women. The Greek ambassador also informs us that the Pandya army consisted of 500 elephants, 4,000 cavalry and 13,000 infantry. According to Asokan edicts the Pandyas were an independent people living beyond the southern border of the Maurya empire. In the first century B.C. King Kharavela of Kalinga led an expedition against this kingdom. A Pandya king is also known to have sent an embassy to the court of the Roman Emperor Augustus.

The earliest reference to the *Chera* (Keralaputra) kingdom occurs in the Asokan inscriptions. It comprised the modern districts of Malabar, Cochin and Northern Travancore. Its capital was Vanji, which is identified by some with a site of the Priyar river, by others with Karur or Karuvur situated in the westernmost taluq of the Trichinopoly district. Early Tamil literature describes at length the military exploits of a king named *Nedunjeral Adan* (*c.* 155 A.D.) who is said to have 'conquered the whole of India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and carved his emblem of the bow on the face of the great mountain after subjugating the kings of the North'. Such claims are but instances of poetic exaggerations, 'possibly founded on successful military raids or even quasi-religious, quasi-military pilgrimages'. Little is really known about the Chera kingdom till much later times. But it appears that the people inhabiting the Chera and the two other neighbouring kingdoms were a seafaring

people who, even as early as the first century A.D., established close commercial contact with Egypt and the Roman Empire. Tondi, Musiri, Kaveripathanam and Korkai were among the well-known trade centres of Peninsular India.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SECOND MAGADHAN EMPIRE

IT TOOK five centuries after the fall of the Imperial Mauryas for Magadha to become the seat of an imperial power for the second time. The architects of the second Magadhan Empire were the Guptas, whose empire was, in respect of territorial extent, less imposing than that of the Mauryas, but was destined to last much longer than its predecessor.

The Guptas

The origin of the Guptas is obscure. Names of officials ending in Gupta are found in the records of the Sunga and Satavahana times. But there is no definite evidence which indicates that the Guptas of Magadha were descended from or even remotely connected with officials whose names ending with Gupta occur in Sunga and Satavahana records.

According to Gupta records the first two rulers of the family were *Maharaj Sri Gupta* and his son *Maharaj Ghatotkocha Gupta*. The title *Maharaj* is, in the opinion of many scholars, indicative of the fact that they were not sovereign rulers. Such a theory presupposes the existence of a sovereign or paramount authority to which they must have been subordinate. But such a paramount power was non-existent in Northern India in the concluding years of the third century A.D. when Sri Gupta and Ghatotkocha Gupta lived and died. This has led some scholars to accept them as rulers enjoying a status of independence. It should, however, be admitted that the third ruler, Chandragupta, who assumed the style of *Maharajadhiraja* must have enjoyed a rank and status superior to that of his two predecessors.

Of the first two rulers nothing is known either of the locality to which they belonged or the exact status they enjoyed. Attention is drawn to a statement recorded by the Chinese pilgrim It-Sing (late seventh century A.D.) to the effect that Sri Gupta caused a temple to be built at Mrigasikhavana for the visiting Chinese pilgrims. Some scholars have proposed an identification of this ruler with the first Gupta monarch. Allan, for example, bases his identification on the ground that it is unlikely that there were two different rulers of the same name at about the same time. This does not sound convincing specially when it is remembered that Sri Gupta mentioned by It-Sing

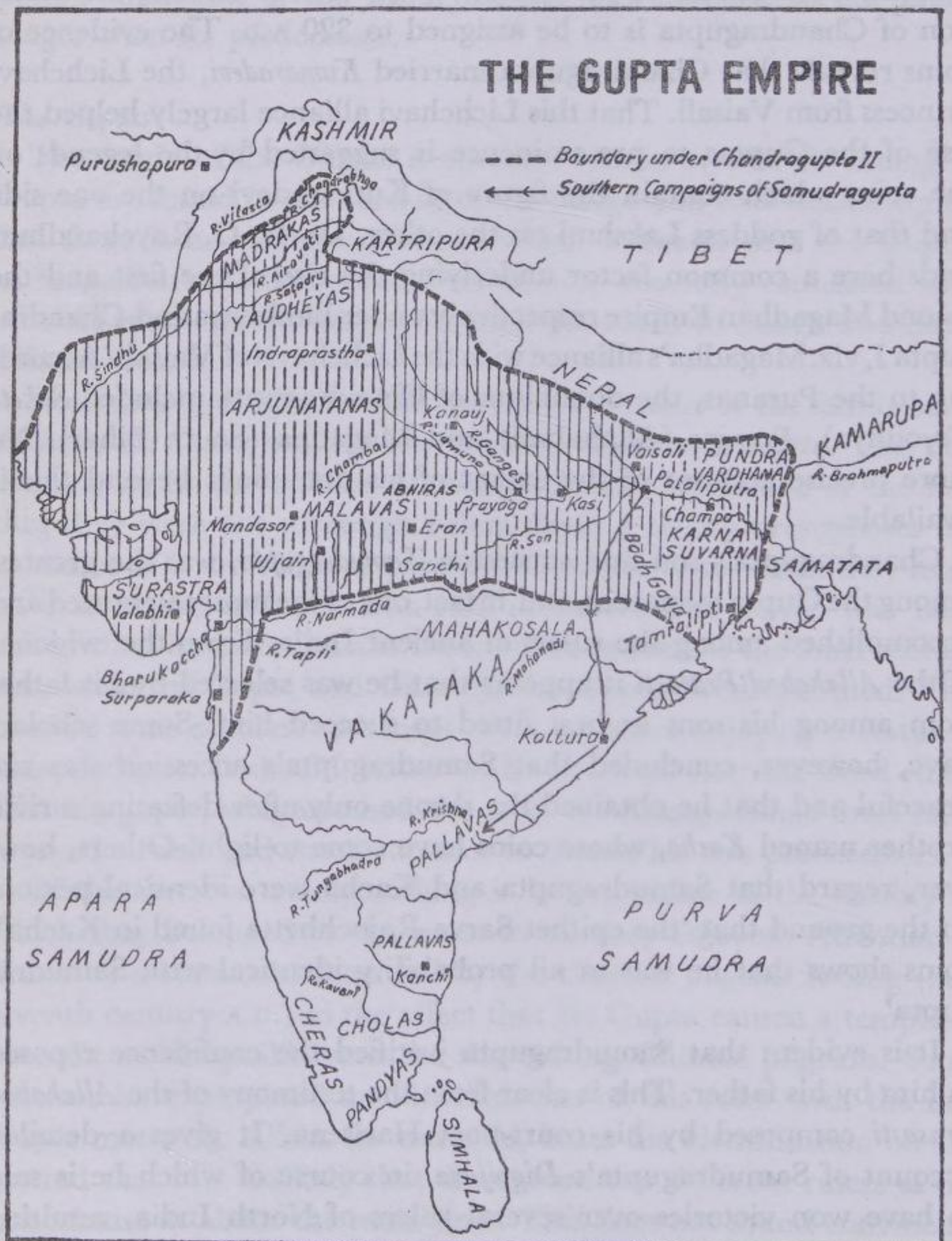
flourished, according to Chinese testimony, about 175 A.D., i.e. at least a century earlier than the probable date of his namesake of the Gupta dynasty.

More definite information about the Gupta rulers is obtained from the third generation since Sri Gupta. The third Gupta ruler *Chandragupta I* assumed the style and title of 'Maharajadhiraja', thus indicating that he enjoyed a rank much superior to that of his two predecessors. It is generally assumed that he founded the Gupta era to mark his accession to the throne. If this view is correct, the accession of Chandragupta is to be assigned to 320 A.D. The evidence of coins reveals that Chandragupta married *Kumaradevi*, the Lichchavi princess from Vaisali. That this Lichchavi alliance largely helped the rise of the Guptas to pre-eminence is suggested by the legends on the coins which contain the figure of Kumaradevi on the one side and that of goddess Lakshmi on the other. Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri finds here a common factor underlying the rise of the first and the second Magadhan Empire respectively under Bimbisara and Chandragupta I, viz. Magadha's alliance with the Lichchavis of Vaisali. According to the Puranas, the dominions of Chandragupta included *Saketa* (Ayodhya), *Prayaga* (Allahabad) and Magadha (South Bihar). No more precise account of the extent of his dominions beyond this is available.

Chandragupta's son and successor, *Samudragupta*, was the greatest among the Gupta monarchs, and, in fact, one of the most celebrated and accomplished among the rulers of ancient India. From the evidence of the *Allahabad Prasasti* it appears that he was selected by his father from among his sons as best fitted to succeed him. Some scholars have, however, concluded that Samudragupta's accession was not peaceful and that he obtained the throne only after defeating a rival brother named *Kacha*, whose coins have come to light. Others, however, regard that Samudragupta and Kacha were identical persons on the ground that 'the epithet Sarva-Rajochhetta found in Kacha's coins shows that he was in all probability identical with Samudragupta'.

It is evident that Samudragupta justified the confidence reposed in him by his father. This is clear from the testimony of the *Allahabad Prasasti* composed by his court-poet Harisena. It gives a detailed account of Samudragupta's *Digvijaya*, in course of which he is said to have won victories over several rulers of North India, resulting in the direct annexation of the territories of the vanquished powers

to the dominions of Magadha. Three of them, viz. *Ganapati Naga*, *Nagasena* and *Nandin* were rulers of Naga origin, ruling over the regions of Vidisa (Bhilsa), Padmavati (situated between Gwalior and Jhansi) and Mathura. Two other kings, *Achyuta* and *Chandra-varman*, were probably rulers of Ahichchatra (modern Ramnagar in the Bareilly district) and Puskarana (Bankura district, West Bengal). The other princes of Aryavarta who, according to the *Prasasti*, are said to have been vanquished by Samudragupta and deprived by



him of their territories were *Rudradeva*, *Mattila*, *Nagadatta* and *Balavarman*. Their dominions cannot be precisely identified. Rudradeva's identification with Rudrasena Vakataka is open to doubt. Mattila might have been a ruler of Bulandshar. Nagadatta was presumably a ruler of Naga lineage, but the kingdom over which he ruled is yet to be identified. The extent of Balavarman's dominions is also uncertain.

Even though the identification of four among the nine princes of Aryavarta mentioned in the *Prasasti* is uncertain, some idea of the extent of Samudragupta's dominions may be obtained from the fact that he captured the scion of the family of Kota (Eastern Punjab and Delhi), subjugated the kings of the *Atavika Rajyas* (forest tracts situated in Central India) and that the rulers of *Samatata* (South-East Bengal), *Davaka* (identified with the hill tract of Chittagong-Tippera or Nowgong district of Assam), *Kamarupa* (Upper Assam), Nepal and Kartripura (Kartarpur in Jullunder district or Kumaon-Garhwal region), described as *Pratyantas* or frontier-states 'gratified his imperious commands by paying all kinds of taxes, obeying his orders and coming to do him homage'. There is also mention of tribal states on the frontiers which submitted to Samudragupta of their own accord. These were the *Malavas* (Eastern Rajputana), *Arjunayanas* (eastern part of Jaipur and Alwar), *Yaudheyas* (Northern Rajputana), *Madrakas* (region between the Ravi and the Chenub), *Abhiras* (Sanchi region of Central India), *Prarjunas* (Narsinghar of M.P.), *Sanakanikas* (Bhilsa), *Kakas* (neighbours of the Sanakanikas) and *Kharaparikas* (Damoh district in M.P.).

A comparative study of the nine states of Aryavarta 'violently uprooted' and the *Atavika Rajyas* directly brought under his control and of the frontier kings and tribes who submitted to his authority will enable us to conclude that the territories directly ruled over by Samudragupta were bounded by the Himalayas on the north, the Vindhyas on the south, the Chambal in the west and Bengal on the east.

The impact of Samudragupta's military exploits was felt in India south of the Vindhyas as well. The same *Prasasti* refers to his campaigns in the Deccan in course of which he defeated as many as twelve princes. They were (i) *Mahendra* of *Kosala* (Mahakosala or districts of Drug, Raipur, Bilaspur and Sambalpur), (ii) *Vyaghraraja* of *Mahakantara* (wild tracts of Gondwana), (iii) *Mantaraja* of Kaurala (Korada), (iv) *Mahendra* of Pistapura (Pithapuram in Godavari district), (v) *Svamidatta* of Kotturu (Kothoor in Ganjam district),

(vi) *Damana* of Erandapalli (also in Ganjam district), (vii) *Vishnugopa* of Kanchi (Conjeevaram), (viii) *Nalaraja* of Avamukta (near Godavari), (ix) *Hastivarman* of Vengi (Ellore), (x) *Ugrasena* of Palakka (in Nellore district), (xi) *Kubera* of Devarashtra (in Vizagapatnam district) and (xii) *Dhananjaya* of Kusthalapura (North Arcot).

In regard to the Deccan, Samudragupta adopted the policy of *dharma-vijaya* as distinct from the policy of *Digvijaya* he had followed with regard to Aryavarta. In the Deccan the victorious monarch did not covet the territories of the vanquished princes and remained content with their submission to his authority and restored to them the territories where they were allowed to continue their rule.

The remarkable military successes won by Samudragupta left an abiding impression on the minds of contemporary rulers even much beyond the territories directly annexed or threatened by him. Thus we are informed by the writer of the Allahabad *Prasasti* that *Daiviputra Sahi-Sahanusahi* and *Saka Murundas* (representatives of the Kushan and Saka ruling families) as well as the people of *Sinhala* and other islands 'purchased peace by self-surrender, bringing presents of maidens, the application of charters, stamped with the Garuda Seal confirming them in the enjoyment of their territories'. There is no doubt an element of vagueness and even of exaggeration in the claim as recorded in the *Prasasti*; nevertheless it appears reasonable to suppose that the Kushan and Saka rulers whose depleted authority still survived in the outlying provinces of the Punjab and Afghanistan, Saurashtra and Central India, as well as the king of Sinhala were impressed with the might and majesty of the Gupta monarch, and they thought it discreet to remain on friendly terms with him by acknowledging, in some way or other, his suzerain authority. We learn from Chinese sources that *Meghavarna*, the Buddhist king of Ceylon, sent to Samudragupta an embassy with rich gifts, seeking his permission to build a monastery at Bodh-Gaya. Hiuen Tsang refers to the *Mahabodhi Sangharam* as the one built by Meghavarna with the permission of the Gupta monarch.

In the later Gupta inscriptions, Samudragupta is said to have performed the *Asvamedha*, as a mark of his paramountcy, many years after it had been in abeyance, and assumed the title of Asvamedha-Parakramah.

Samudragupta was endowed with versatile gifts. To his remarkable military talents he added musical tastes and abilities of a high order. Harisena informs us that 'he put to shame the preceptor of

the lord of Gods and Tumburu and Narada and others by his sharp and polished interest and choral skill and musical accomplishments. He established his title of *Kaviraja* by various poetical compositions.' Unfortunately no literary works have survived to prove the correctness of Harisena's claim; but his musical taste and talents are attested by several coins which depict him as playing on a lute (*veena*).

Dated documents relative to the reign of Samudragupta are lacking. If his father's accession took place in 320 A.D., the beginning of the Gupta era, and further that his reign covered a brief period of ten years, Samudragupta's accession may be assigned to about 330 A.D. or shortly after. As the earliest known date of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya is 380 A.D. it may be supposed that the reign of this illustrious monarch came to an end sometime between 375 and 380 A.D.

Ramagupta: Samudragupta had several sons. If the statement occurring in Visakhadatta's drama *Devi-Chandraguptam*, composed two centuries later, which has survived only in fragments, is to be given any credence, the immediate successor of Samudragupta was his son *Ramagupta*. According to the account recorded by Visakhadatta, Ramagupta, immediately following his accession, was so adversely involved in a war with a Saka ruler that he agreed to surrender to his enemy his own queen, *Dhruvadevi*. This cowardly project, however, fell through owing to vigorous opposition of Ramagupta's younger brother Chandragupta (II) who killed his cowardly brother, married his widowed queen and ascended the throne.

The account, summarised above, appears strikingly curious; its details also lack corroboration. Many scholars are, therefore, disinclined to accept the historicity of the account and even the existence of Ramagupta. It is true that some coins of Ramagupta have come to light but there is no evidence to definitely establish his identity as the son or successor of Samudragupta. He might have been, as suggested by some scholars, a local ruler of Malwa, unconnected with the Guptas. It is, however, of interest to note that the echoes of Visakhadatta's story lingered on till much later ages, as for example, in Banabhatta's *Harsha-Charita*, Sanjan plates of Amoghavarsha ard *Majumalut-Tawarikh*. In view of the existence of such a tradition lingering on till much later times it has been supposed that 'though it is difficult to believe that the drama (of Visakhadatta) had a historical basis...we can hardly dismiss it off-hand as

altogether a figment of imagination. We must, therefore, suspend our judgement upon the historical character of Ramagupta, and ignore his strange but eventful reign.'

Chandragupta II Vikramaditya: Chandragupta II, born of queen Dattadevi, succeeded Samudragupta who, according to Gupta records, had chosen him as his successor, as the worthiest among his sons. The other variants of his name are *Sinha Chandra* and *Sinha Vikrama*. To distinguish him from the founder of the Gupta Empire of the same name, he is commonly named as Chandragupta II.

The new ruler fully justified the confidence reposed in him by his illustrious father. Desirous of extending the bounds of the vast empire bequeathed by his father, Chandragupta led a campaign of war in the west. It ended in the defeat of the Saka king *Rudrasinha III* and the annexation of Malwa and Saurashtra to the Gupta empire. This resulted in the extension of the empire of the Guptas to the farthest limits of India in the west and the overthrow of Saka rule after it had lasted for nearly three centuries. There are references to these western campaigns of Chandragupta II in the *Udaygiri Cave Inscription* of Virsena Saba, an amatya of the Gupta monarch. The conquest of Malwa and Saurashtra by Chandragupta II is also attested by Banabhatta and the testimony of coins.

Another important event of the reign of Chandragupta II was the matrimonial alliance concluded with the Nagas on the one hand and the Vakatakas on the other. He himself married *Kuberanaga* described as 'born of Naga Kula' and gave his daughter *Prabhavati* in marriage to the Vakataka king Rudrasena II of Central Deccan. These alliances, specially the one with the Vakatakas, did as much as the successful campaign against the Sakas to enhance the power and prestige of the Guptas.

Contemporary records credit Chandragupta II with other victories besides the one won against the Sakas. His general, Amrakarddava, is said to have attained great glory by winning many battles. If 'Chandra' of the Meherauli Iron Pillar Inscription is identified with Chandragupta II, as suggested by several scholars, then it is possible to claim that he defeated 'a confederacy of hostile chiefs in Vanga' or Eastern Bengal. He is also credited in the same record with the despatch of his armies up to the 'seven mouths of the Sindhu' and the conquest of the Valhika territories situated on the Beas Valley bordering on Kashmir and possibly ruled over by the Kushans. Thus Chandragupta II rounded off the ancestral dominions,

extending their limits to the furthest points in the west, the east and the north-west, thus completing the work initiated by his illustrious father.

Great as a conqueror, Chandragupta II was equally great as an administrator. Fa-Hien, the Chinese pilgrim, who visited India during the rule of this monarch, speaks highly of the efficient manner in which the empire was administered. But his greatness was not confined merely to the realm of conquest and administration. Chandragupta II was no less great as a patron of learning and literature. The title *Vikramaditya* assumed by him has led many scholars to identify him with Vikramaditya, well-known in Indian legends. It is true that the Gupta monarch does not fulfil all the attributes of the legendary Vikramaditya and that the story of the *Navaratna* is but a myth; but there is independent and reliable evidence on which it may be claimed that *Kalidasa*, the most celebrated among the 'Nine Jewels', lived in the same age as the Gupta ruler. The identification of Chandragupta II with the legendary Vikramaditya also receives support from the fact that both of them were associated with the historic city of Ujjain.

Chandragupta was a devout worshipper of Vishnu—a 'paramabhagavata'. But like nearly all other rulers of ancient India he practised religious toleration. While some of his ministers were devotees of Siva, his general Amrakarddava was, by religion, a Buddhist.

The reign of Chandragupta II is usually supposed to have ended in about 415 A.D.

Kumaragupta I Mahendraditya: Chandragupta II's successor was his son Kumaragupta II, born of Dhruvadevi. He maintained intact the vast dominions inherited from his father and performed the *Asvamedha* as a mark of his paramount authority. Throughout his long reign extending over forty years (415-455 A.D.) the empire enjoyed peace and prosperity except that towards the end of his reign the unbroken peace was disturbed. This was due to an invasion led by a people known as the *Pushyamitras* as recorded in the Bhitari Inscription. The reading 'Pushyamitra' occurring in the inscription is not beyond dispute and who they were is not definitely known; but the fact remains that the invasion constituted a major danger and it was with considerable difficulties that it was averted by the efforts of Prince Skandagupta.

A number of Kumaragupta's coins have been discovered. They reveal that the Gupta monarch assumed the style of *Mahendraditya*.

Skandagupta Vikramaditya: He was the last great representative of the Imperial Guptas. Prior to accession to the throne, he had already distinguished himself in the war against the 'Pushyamitras'. But the success won over the 'Pushyamitras' did not mean the end of troubles. The Huns who had already established themselves in Bactria were now threatening to cross the Hindukush and appear on the Indian scene. The threat materialised shortly after Skandagupta's accession. The Gupta monarch successfully dealt with the invaders and hurled them back at the initial stage, as is claimed in Gupta inscriptions, but it is also evident that he could not prevent their reappearing on the outlying parts and even in the interior of the empire shortly after. The initial success of Skandagupta against the Huns, referred to as *Mlechchas* in Gupta records, was no doubt a remarkable feat of arms but we should not exaggerate his achievement in the light of successes the Huns were destined to win at the expense of his successors at no distant date. It is true that the Huns did not win in India as spectacular a success as they had achieved in the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire about the same time; but the less striking role of the Huns in India and in the east, as compared to the records of their performance in the west, is perhaps to be explained in terms of the utter exhaustion from which the Roman Empire suffered rather than the military opposition of the Guptas.

Another event of the reign of Skandagupta was the construction of a new embankment to the *Sudarshana Lake* originally built in the days of Chandragupta Maurya, and later repaired by the famous Saka ruler Rudradamana.

The reign of Skandagupta who assumed the title of *Vikramaditya* was short-lived ending in 467 A.D.

Skandagupta's Successors: The order of succession after Kumaragupta is not clear and beyond dispute. Available evidence points to the fact that his two sons—Skanda and Puragupta—both ruled in Magadha; but while some scholars accept Puragupta as the immediate successor of Kumaragupta, others, perhaps on stronger grounds, place Puragupta after his brother (and probably also his rival). Whatever the order of succession, the reign of Puragupta, like that of his brother, was of a short duration; for in 477 A.D. Budhagupta, a son of Puragupta, was already in possession of the throne. Under his rule extending over twenty years, the empire was outwardly intact, but its hold on the outlying provinces of Kathiawar and Bundelkhand had become perceptibly weak.

In the list of successors of Puragupta several names, like those of *Narasimhagupta Baladitya*, *Kumaragupta II*, *Vainyagupta*, *Bhanugupta* and *Vishnugupta*, occur. The order of succession is not clear again; it is not possible to determine the extent of territories ruled over by them with even an approximation to certainty. But on the whole, the fortunes of the empire were steadily on the decline. This was largely due to continuous invasions of the Huns on the one hand, and dissensions within the imperial family. By the middle of the sixth century A.D. the Gupta rule ceased to be effective even in Magadha and its neighbourhood.

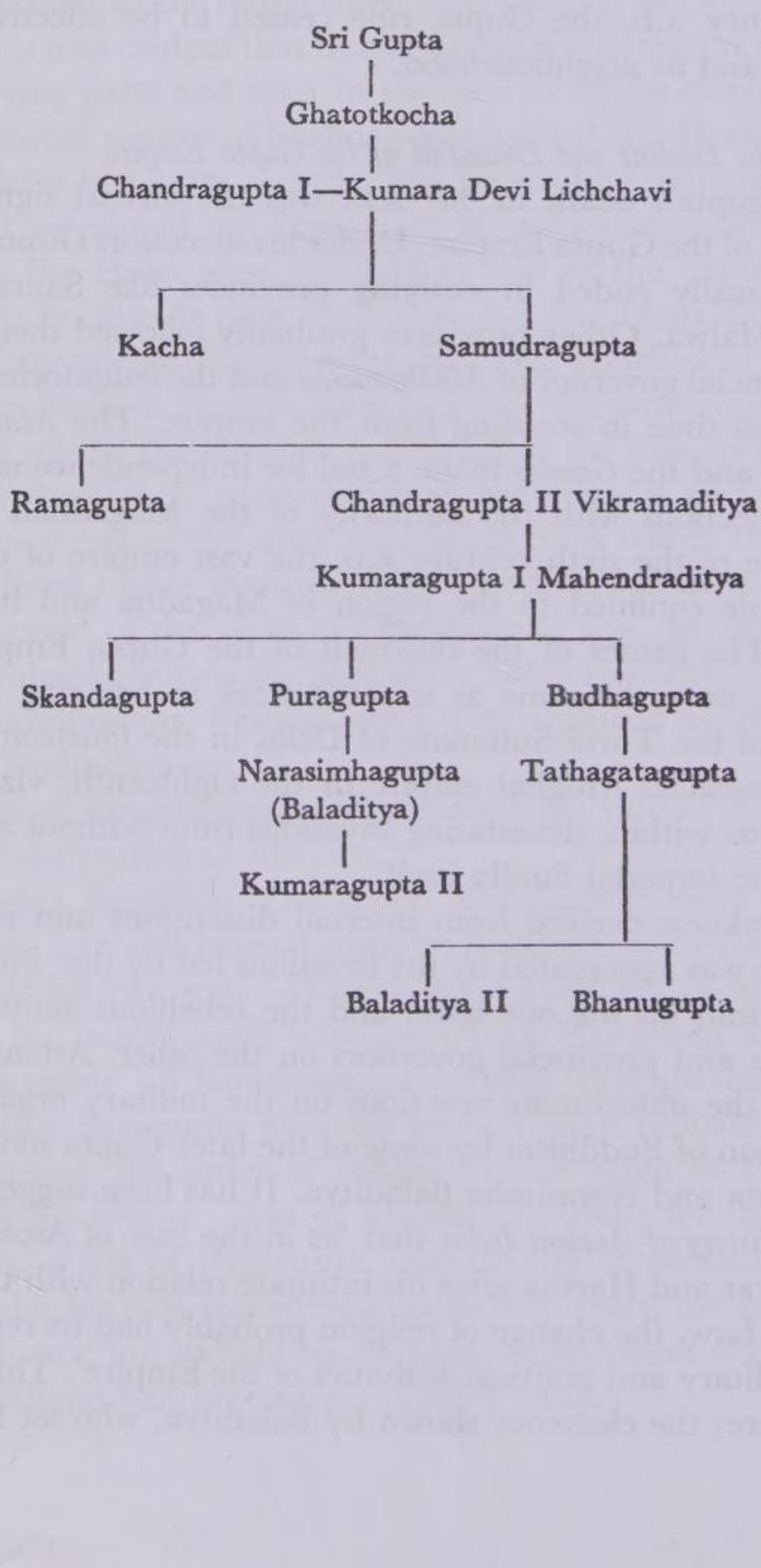
Causes of the Decline and Downfall of the Gupta Empire

Skandagupta's death in 467 A.D. was the virtual signal for the disruption of the Gupta Empire. Under his successors Gupta authority had practically ended in outlying provinces like Saurashtra and Western Malwa. Other provinces gradually followed their example. The provincial governor of *Madhyadesha* and the feudatories in Bengal also lost no time in seceding from the empire. The *Maitrakas*, the *Maukharis* and the *Gaudas* made a bid for independence and severed their connections with the authority of the Magadhan rulers. By the middle of the sixth century A.D. the vast empire of the Guptas had become confined to the region of Magadha and its adjacent districts. The causes of the downfall of the Gupta Empire, it has been said, were the same as were at work in bringing about 'the downfall of the Turki Sultanate of Delhi in the fourteenth century and the so-called Mughal empire in the eighteenth, viz. outbreak of rebellions within, devastating invasions from without and dissensions in the imperial family itself'.

The weakness derived from internal dissensions and rivalries for the throne was aggravated by the invasions led by the Pushyamitras and the Huns on the one hand and the rebellious activities of the feudatories and provincial governors on the other. Attention is also drawn to the unfortunate reactions on the military organisation of the adoption of Buddhism by some of the later Gupta monarchs like Budhagupta and Narasimha Baladitya. It has been suggested in the *Political History of Ancient India* that 'as in the case of Asoka after the Kalinga war and Harsha after his intimate relation with the Chinese Master of Law, the change of religion probably had its repercussions on the military and political activities of the Empire'. This is at best a conjecture; the clemency shown by Baladitya, who set Mihirakula

free from his captivity, is an instance of 'misplaced clemency', but it can hardly be linked up with the fate of the empire which had begun to show signs of weakness even before Mihirkula had appeared on the scene.

Genealogy of the Imperial Guptas



CHAPTER EIGHT

THE POST-GUPTA AGE

POLITICALLY India is represented as peaks alternating with valleys. The first peak was reached in the days when Magadhan ascendancy starting with the accession of Bimbisara culminated in the great and unprecedented imperial authority of Asoka Maurya. But the post-Asokan period marked a downward move to internal disunity and foreign invasions. Then in course of centuries the forces of stability once again gained ground, leading to the emergence of the Second Magadhan Empire under the Guptas. The period following the downfall of the Guptas, however, presented the same spectacle of internal and external aggressions such as had characterised the days after the dissolution of the Mauryan Empire.

The Huns: The successive Hun invasions were one of the most important factors in the weakening and downfall of the Gupta Empire. These nomadic people lived on the borders of China as early as the second century B.C. Later they displaced the Yueh-Chis in North-Western China. Still later one of the branches of these people, known as the Epthalites or White Huns, moved towards the Oxus Valley and then advanced towards Persia and India. In the fifth century A.D. they overran the kingdom of Gandhara and even threatened the interior of the Gupta Empire then ruled over by Skandagupta. Skanda, however, met the danger with great courage and determination and drove out the invaders. For the next half a century the Huns did not repeat their efforts to intrude on the Gupta dominions.

Towards the close of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century A.D., the Huns, led by Toramana, issued out from Kashmir and Gandhara region, threatening the Punjab and actually conquering large areas in Western India and *Madhyadesha*. His son, *Mihirakula*, who succeeded him, according to Hiuen Tsang's testimony, ruled over the conquered areas from *Sakala* or Sialkot as his capital. Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* describes Mihirakula as a cruel and bloodthirsty tyrant who carried out his raids as far south as the Peninsular India and Ceylon. The account of his conquest, as recorded by Kalhana, is no doubt exaggerated, but independent Chinese and Greek sources bear out the charge of cruelty and violence levelled against him by the Kashmiri chronicler. An inscription dated 530 A.D.

bears witness to the extension of Hun rule over Gwalior. It is, however, evident that Mihirakula was not destined to enjoy his supremacy for long. He met two formidable opponents in Yasodharman, King of Malwa and Narasimhagupta Baladitya. While the Mandasor inscription of the former claims victory over Mihirakula, Hiuen Tsang speaks of the latter's victory over the Hun leader who was taken prisoner by the Gupta army but subsequently set free at the intercession of the Gupta Queen-Mother. These reverses compelled Mihirakula to forgo his conquests in the interior and retire to Kashmir where he died not many years later.

Yet another powerful force with which the Huns in India had to contend was that of the *Maukharis* of *Uttar Pradesh*. Epigraphic records refer to victories won by the Maukharis over the Huns.

It is thus evident that the Huns failed to build a lasting hegemony in India. Their failure in India is a striking contrast to their victories in the west where they succeeded in overthrowing the historic empire of the Romans. But it would be a mistake to regard the Hun penetration in India as an unimportant episode. The author of the *Oxford History of India* has rightly observed that the barbarian invasions of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. marked a turning-point in the history of India. Politically, the Hun inroads hastened the decline of the Guptas. Socially, these led to the intermingling of the foreigners with the Indians on the social level, paving the way for social redisposition and the admittance of Indianised foreigners into the fold of the Indian society.

Yasodharman of Mandasor: One of the most interesting personalities on the stage of Indian history in the days of the weakening of the Gupta empire was Yasodharman of Mandasor. His rise and fall were alike meteoric. How he came to power is not known any more than how he met his end. Mandasor, which became under him the seat of an extensive and powerful kingdom, was originally a province of the Gupta Empire. But in the days when the empire of the Guptas began to show visible signs of decline, Yasodharman proclaimed independence and even made a bid for paramountcy. We are told in the Mandasor Stone Pillar Inscription of 533 A.D. that 'Janendra Yasodharman' received the submission of princes belonging to the entire region from the Himalayas in the north to the Eastern Ghats in the south, and from the Arabian Sea in the west to the *Lauhitya* or Brahmaputra in the east. The statement is more conventional than correct, and apparently abounds in exaggeration.

But there can be little doubt that Yasodharman enjoyed an extraordinary position by virtue of his successful defiance of the authority of the Guptas on the one hand, and the victory won over the Hun leader, Mihirakula, on the other. But it is also on evidence that Yasodharman's end was as sudden as his advent. We have little or no information on how his career was brought to a close or what fate overtook Malwa after his death. It is reasonable to suppose that he did not build to last.

The Maukharis of Kanauj: Another powerful kingdom which ranged itself in opposition to the Huns, besides Malwa of Yasodharman, was that of the Maukharis. According to traditional accounts, the Maukharis were descended from *Asvapati*, king of Madra, whose name figures prominently in the *Mahabharata*. References to this ancient clan may be traced in early records of Maurya times. In the days of Gupta rule, the Maukharis, settled in Bihar, Kotah and U.P. area, held a subordinate rank. It was not till the sixth century A.D. that they came into prominence. The founder of the future greatness of the Maukhari power was *Isanavarman* (554 A.D.) who is credited with victories against the *Andhras*, *Sulikas* and *Gaudas* and the assumption of the title of *Maharajadhiraja* as an indication of his supremacy. The rise of the Maukharis was facilitated largely by the gradual weakening of the power of the Imperial Guptas. Under Isanavarman or his successor, *Sarvavarman*, a conflict raged between the Maukharis and the Huns which ended in the defeat of the latter.

Under *Avantivarman*, the third ruler in succession from Isanavarman, the authority of the Maukharis was acknowledged over an area comprised in modern *Uttar Pradesh*, besides portions of Magadha. The most important event of the reign of the next ruler, *Grahavarman*, was the conclusion of matrimonial alliance with the Pushyabhutis of Thaneswar, resulting in the marriage of the Pushyabhuti princess, *Rajyasri*, with Grahavarman. But Grahavarman had to contend, before long, with a powerful and ambitious antagonist. He was *Devagupta*, king of Malwa, who, in alliance with Sasanka, king of the Gaudas, led an attack on Kanauj, the capital of the Maukharis. In the conflict that followed Grahavarman was defeated and killed.

The Maitrakas of Valabhi: Saurashtra was probably the first province to have seceded from the empire of the Guptas. The emergence of this westernmost province as an independent kingdom occurred under the leadership of ruling family of the *Maitrakas*. Who the Maitrakas were is not definitely known but it has generally been

supposed that they were foreign immigrants into India. Whatever their origin, the Maitrakas played a role of considerable importance in the post-Gupta age.

The founder of the newkingdom was *Senapati Bhattaraka*. His capital was Valabhi, though the exact extent of the dominions ruled by him is not known. Nor is it quite clear if he owed nominal allegiance to any superior authority like that of the Guptas or the Huns. His son and successor, *Dharasena I*, also preferred to describe himself as a *Senapati*. But his brothers, *Dronasinha*, *Dhruvasena I* and *Dharapatta*, who ruled in succession, assumed the more ambitious title of *Maharaja*. There is evidence that the family proclaimed a status of full independence under *Dhruvasena II*. Hiuen Tsang, who visited his court, attests to the inclusion of *Malwa* within his dominions and the accession of prestige and power through matrimonial relations with the family of *Harsha Siladitya* of Kanauj. That the next ruler *Dhruvasena II* or *Dhruvabhatta* added to his power and prestige still further is suggested by the full-fledged style of *Maharajadhiraja Parameswara*, *Paramabhattaraka* assumed by him. He seems to have extended his rule as far west as *Broach*. The celebrated poetical work *Bhattikavya* was probably composed during his rule. The last known representative of the family was *Siladitya* under whom Valabhi continued to enjoy reputation as an important centre of advanced learning. The Valabhi kingdom lasted for three centuries—the longest record of rule to the credit of a post-Gupta ruling family in Northern India.

The Later Guptas of Malwa: Inscriptions discovered in Gaya and Shahabad districts of Bihar reveal the existence of a ruling family described by modern historians as the later Guptas. The names of the rulers of this family no doubt end with Gupta, but there is no evidence suggestive of their direct link with the imperial or earlier Guptas of Magadha. Like the Maukharis, the later Guptas raised themselves from the position of feudatories to the rank of independent rulers in the days which saw the progressive weakening of the Gupta Empire. It seems probable that the nucleus of their power was Malwa from where they gradually pushed on to Magadha.

The founder of the dynasty was Krishnagupta, but no details of his reign or position are known. His two successors, *Harshagupta* and *Jivitagupta*, probably belonged to the middle of the sixth century A.D. The first notable ruler of the dynasty was *Kumaragupta III* who is credited with victory over Maukhari Isanavarman and the exten-

sion of his dominions as far as Prayaga. But the Maukhari power revived soon after and Damodaragupta who succeeded *Kumaragupta III* is said to have suffered reverses at the hands of his Maukhari rivals. The next ruler *Mahasenagupta* ruled from his headquarters in Eastern Malwa and is supposed to have led victorious campaigns against *Kamarupa*, then under *Susthitavarman*. His son *Devagupta*, in alliance with *Sasanka*, king of the Gaudas, attacked Kanauj and defeated the Maukhari ruler Grahavarman. His success, however, proved illusory, for soon after he was killed in action by the Pushyabhuti king, *Rajyavardhana*, who had come to the aid of the Maukharis. *Madhavagupta*, the successor of Mahasenagupta, was compelled to acknowledge Harsha Siladitya of Kanauj as his sovereign. In consequence he was appointed by the latter as his viceroy in Magadha, probably to act as a sort of bulwark against the growing power of Sasanka.

After the death of Harsha Siladitya, Madhavagupta's son *Adityasena* proclaimed independence and performed *Asvamedha* as an indication of his newly-acquired status. He strengthened his position by entering into matrimonial relations with the ruling families of Kanauj and Nepal. The power of the later Guptas survived till the middle of the eighth century A.D. in increasingly diminished extent.

The Gaudas and Sasanka: Epigraphic records reveal that Bengal was included in the imperial dominions of the Guptas in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. There is also evidence in the same sources that since the beginning of the disintegration of the Gupta Empire from about the second half of the sixth century A.D., Bengal, like several other provinces of the erstwhile empire, seceded and proclaimed independence. We have, for example, the evidence of the existence of at least three sovereign rulers in Bengal—*Dharmaditya*, *Gopa Chandra* and *Samacharadeva*, attested by copper-plate grants. Details, no doubt, are lacking about their achievements, but there can be little doubt that they enjoyed sovereign status and at least one of them, Samacharadeva, issued several gold coins. While they ruled over lower Bengal, there is evidence that the eastern region of Bengal also emerged as an indepedent political unit under *Prthuvira* and *Sudhanyaditya*, and for sometime Gupta rule was limited to portions of North Bengal alone.

The part of Bengal destined to play the most decisive role in the closing years of the sixth and the first half of the seventh century A.D., was the kingdom of the *Gaudas*. Roughly speaking, it corresponded to southern and eastern parts of Bengal. In the days when the later

Guptas became powerful in the post-Gupta ages, this portion of Bengal was held in subjection by the later Guptas till the close of the sixth century A.D. But soon after, Gauda emerged into a state of unprecendented predominance which exceeded the geographical boundary of Bengal and made its influence felt in Northern India. This ascendancy of the Gauda kingdom was the achievement of King Sasanka.

Sasanka: The early life of Sasanka is little known; he is described in Rhotasgarh epigraph as a *Maha-Samanta*. It has led some scholars to the conclusion that Sasanka began his career as a feudatory under Mahasenagupta of the later Gupta family. But he soon declared independence and his capital Karnasuvarna became the centre of a rapidly growing kingdom. One of his earliest exploits was directed against the *Mana* and *Sailodbhava* rulers of Orissa. It resulted in the seizure by Sasanka of *Dandabhukti*, *Utkala* and *Kangoda*, corresponding to the present district of Midnapore and the northern and southern provinces of Orissa. From other sources it is also known that Sasanka succeeded in extending his authority over Magadha, Banaras and Ganjam, besides the whole of Bengal. Both Banabhatta and Hiuen Tsang refer to his encounter with the Maukharis of Kanauj, and the Pushyabhutis of Thaneswar. In alliance with Devagupta of Malwa he made war on Grahavarman, the Maukhari ruler of Kanauj and defeated and killed him in battle. He was immediately after involved in a conflict with Pushyabhuti Rajyavardhana who had advanced at the head of his army to the aid of the Maukharis. Banabhatta and Hiuen Tsang both convey the impression that Sasanka treacherously instigated the murder of Rajyavardhana after having invited him to a conference parlour. The death, in quick succession, of Grahavarman and Rajyavardhana, meant the removal of two of Sasanka's most formidable enemies. For a time his position as the most powerful monarch in Northern India was unchallenged. But he soon found a rival in Harsha Siladitya who had succeeded his brother Rajyavardhana to the throne of Thaneswar and had also taken charge of the Kanauj kingdom which was without a ruler since the death of Grahavarman, his brother-in-law. To the united resources of Kanauj and Thaneswar Harsha had added the help of Bhaskaravarman, king of Kamarupa. The conflict that ensued kept Sasanka engaged throughout the rest of his life. But it appears that both Harsha Siladitya and his ally Bhaskaravarman failed to win decisive success against Sasanka as long as he lived. It was only

after the latter's death in 637-38 A.D. that Bhaskaravarman was able to conquer Karnasuvarna, the capital of the Gauda kingdom.

There are many obvious gaps in the life-story of Sasanka as so far known. Both Banabhatta and Hiuen Tsang have done him scant justice. Unlike Harsha, Sasanka had no official biographer of his own. The cruel persecution of the Buddhists, attributed to him, is not without some exaggeration. There can be little doubt that he was the first among the rulers of Bengal to have raised that kingdom to a status of pre-eminence not attained before. He was, in every sense of the term, the precursor of the Palas who were destined to fulfil the dream first entertained by Sasanka, king of the Gaudas.

The Empire of Kanauj under the Pushyabhutis

New Centre of Political Gravity: With the decline of the Imperial Mauryas Pataliputra tended to lose its monopoly of importance. The rise of the Kushan Empire saw the transference of the seat of political gravity from the east to the north-west, from Pataliputra to Purushapura (Peshawar). Under the early or imperial Guptas Magadha and Pataliputra were rehabilitated, no doubt, as the seat of imperial power. But in the centuries following the disruption of the second Magadhan Empire new rivalries ensued. New contenders entered the arena. Fortunes fluctuated. Powers rose and fell. And then after a lapse of nearly two centuries since the decline of the imperial Guptas, forces of unity gathered round the new city of Kanauj which emerged as the centre of political gravity, first under the auspices of the Pushyabhutis and then that of the Gurjara-Pratiharas. Down to the first quarter of the tenth century Kanauj, described as 'Mahodoyasri' or 'the city of great fortune', dominated the scene of the political activities in India north of the Vindhyas.

The Pushyabhutis under Harsha Siladitya: The founder of the future greatness of the Pushyabhuti power was *Prabhakaravardhana*. According to the *Harsha-Charita* he belonged to a family which derived its name from its founder, a devout Saiva, by name *Pushyabhuti*. He seems, for all practical purposes, to have been a legendary figure. The early inscriptions and royal seals of the Pushyabhutis mention the names of only four predecessors of Harsha. They were *Naravardhana*, *Adityavardhana*, *Prabhakaravardhana* and *Rajyavardhana*. The first-named prince probably belonged to the close of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century A.D. *Adityavardhana* is known to have

entered into matrimonial relations with the later Guptas by marrying one of their princesses, Mahasenagupta, probably a sister of Mahasenagupta. The third ruler, *Prabhakaravardhana*, won distinction for successes against the Huns. Banabhatta describes him as 'a lion to the Hun deers, a burning fever to the king of Sindhu, a troubler of the sleep of the Gurjara king, a bilious plague to that scent-elephant, the lord of Gandhara, destroyer of the skill of the *Latas*, as axe to the creeper which is the goddess of fortune of Malwa'. The description, being conventional, is not free from exaggeration. But that Prabhakaravardhana had secured for himself a status higher than that of his predecessors may be concluded from the fact that unlike them he had assumed the style of a full-fledged sovereign, viz. *Maharajadhiraja* and *Parama-Bhattaraka*.

According to the testimony of Banabhatta, Prabhakaravardhana died while his eldest son Rajyavardhana was engaged in an encounter with the Huns. In fact the news of his father's death made him return in haste to the capital and assume the charge of government. But almost immediately following his accession, Rajyavardhana heard the alarming news of the defeat and death of his brother-in-law *Grahavarman* of Kanauj and the capture of his sister, *Rajyasri*, by Devagupta, king of Malwa and his ally, *Sasanka*, king of the Gaudas. Rajyavardhana hastened to the relief of Kanauj. He won initial success but lost his life, a victim to treacherous assassination at the instance of Sasanka. Several scholars have expressed doubt about the authenticity of the story of the tragic end of Rajyavardhana as recorded by Banabhatta. But while there may be legitimate grounds for controversy regarding the share of Sasanka's responsibility for this misdeed, the fact remains that the deaths of Grahavarman and Rajyavardhana took place in quick succession.

It was at this critical moment that Rajyavardhana's younger brother, *Harsha*, then a youth of barely sixteen years of age, was called upon not only to ascend the throne of Thaneswar but also to assume the responsibility of administering Kanauj (606 A.D.). Hiuen Tsang tells us that Harsha accepted the responsibility with reluctance and abstained for some time from assuming any title other than that of *Kumara*. The reluctance might have been due to the fact that Grahavarman, though childless, was survived by a brother. A seal discovered in Nalanda, in fact, speaks of a brother of Grahavarman having succeeded him to the throne of Kanauj. It was not till many years had elapsed since his accession that Harsha

made Kanauj the capital of the two kingdoms placed at his disposal by a curious stroke of fortune.

Banabhatta informs us that immediately on coming to power Harsha proclaimed his determination to chastise Sasanka, rescue his sister, who on being set free from captivity had gone no one knew where, and to set up his suzerain authority. His first task was to trace out his sister. He left Bhandi in charge of his army for carrying on the war with Sasanka, and himself undertook extensive travels in search of Rajyasri whom he found at last near the Vindhyas and rescued. Banabhatta informs us that Harsha strengthened his position by an alliance with Kumara Bhaskaravarman of *Pragjyotish* (Assam). But he does not follow up the story of the Maukhari-Pushyabhuti campaign against Sasanka. Hieun Tsang who is our principal source treats the subject in a general and vague way. It appears from the evidence of available inscriptions that Harsha's efforts to humiliate Sasanka did not succeed and his great antagonist ruled with undiminished glory till his death in 637-38 A.D. It was only after Sasanka's death that Harsha's ally, Kumara Bhaskaravarman, was able to occupy Karnasuvarna (Sasanka's capital), as the evidence of the Nidhanpur copperplate reveals. Another prince with whom Harsha thought it discreet to enter into a sort of alliance was *Madhavagupta*, a scion of the later Gupta family of Malwa and Magadha. Hiuen Tsang also refers to matrimonial relations entered into by Harsha Siladitya with the ruling family of Valabhi by marrying his daughter to *Dhruvasena II*.

We are told by the Chinese pilgrim that Harsha waged incessant warfare until in six years he had fought the 'five Indies'. But the details of the date, scope and extent of the military campaigns are lacking. It is, however, evident that Harsha invaded Kangoda region besides North Bengal. It is also claimed that the matrimonial alliances with the house of Valabhi followed a series of battles in which Harsha had triumphed. Banabhatta claims for his patron successful campaigns against Sind. Tusara-Saila, Kashmir and Nepal are also supposed to have felt the weight of Harsha's arms. But the evidence in support of these claims is rather feeble and cannot be regarded as devoid of exaggeration.

Harsha's military career was not one of uninterrupted success. The *Aohle Inscription* dated 634-35 A.D. records victory won by Chalukya Pulakeshin II over the forces led by Harsha, 'the Lord of the whole of Uttarapatha' (*Sakala-Uttarapatha-natha*). The date and place of the

battle are both uncertain. The general conclusion that it was fought on the bank of the *Narmada* is not well-founded.

Both Banabhatta and Hiuen Tsang have exaggerated the military achievements and the extent of Harsha's dominions. The description of Harsha as 'the Lord of whole of Uttarapatha', in the Chalukya records, was a deliberate exercise in exaggeration with a view to emphasising the military glory of the Chalukya monarch. A critical examination of the relevant evidence would show that the territories over which Harsha's rule was directly acknowledged were confined to the areas of modern Uttarapatha, portions of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Kamarupa and Valabhi were ruled over by princes who were in alliance with him but not under his direct authority. Nepal, Kashmir and Sind were, in all likelihood, outside his sphere of influence. The evidence that his authority extended as far south as the Narmada is also inadequate and lacking in corroboration. But even if Harsha's empire was not co-extensive with Uttarapatha, there is little doubt that Kanauj under him enjoyed a pre-eminence such as no other kingdom enjoyed north of the Vindhyas. Kanauj under Harsha eclipsed the glory of Pataliputra and replaced it as the centre of political gravity. This pre-eminence of Kanauj survived the death of Harsha.

Harsha did not build to last. He no doubt made strenuous personal efforts to keep the empire well-governed, and was almost constantly on tour, visiting the outlying parts of his empire. But his death without an heir meant the immediate disruption of the empire which was basically feudal in character and whose foundations had been laid at least two generations before his time. Harsha died in 647 A.D.

Harsha's greatness was not confined to his military exploits or to the administrative sphere alone. He was endowed with a versatile genius. Though engaged in almost constant warfare he found time to cultivate literary pursuits. He not only patronised Sanskritic scholars like Banabhatta, his court-poet and author of *Harsha-Charita* and *Kadambari*, but himself composed three dramas—*Nagananda*, *Priyadarshika* and *Ratnavali*, which have won recognition as excellent literary compositions. Though a 'Parama-mahesvara' or Saiva, Harsha was tolerant enough to extend liberal patronage to Buddhism, even to the extent of antagonising a section of orthodox devotees of Brahmanism. His reputation spread as far as China, whose ruler, the contemporary T'ang Emperor *Tai-Tsung*, sent to his court two successive embassies in 643 and 647 A.D.

House of Pushyabhuti

Maharaja Naravardhana
|
Maharaja Rajyavardhana
|
Maharajadhiraja Prabhakaravardhana
|
Maharajadhiraja Rajyavardhana — Maharajadhiraja Harshavardhana

Kanauj in the Post-Harsha Age

The history of Kanauj after Harsha's death is full of confusion. We know from Chinese sources that one of the ministers, *Arunasva* or *Arjuna*, usurped the throne immediately after the death of his royal master. He, however, incurred the enmity of the Chinese by putting to death the armed personnel of the Chinese mission despatched in 647 A.D. The leader of the mission, however, escaped. He sought and obtained the help of the Tibetan king *Srong-tsan Gampo* and of a Nepalese contingent, returned and engaged the usurper on the throne of Kanauj in battle, defeated and took him a prisoner to Tibet. Thus ended the last vestige of Harsha's power in Kanauj.

The collapse of the Pushyabhuti empire saw the emergence of the former feudatory powers as full-fledged independent units. *Bhaskaravarman* lost no time in annexing Karnasuvarna, while *Adityasena* proclaimed independence in Magadh. In the west and the north-west the *Gurjaras* and the *Karkotas* emerged as formidable powers in Rajputana and Kashmir.

For nearly a hundred years after Harsha's death the history of Kanauj is shrouded in uncertainty. The veil of darkness is not lifted till the opening years of the eighth century A.D., when the imperial city is found to be held in possession by *Yasovarman*. Like Yasodharman of Mandasor, the career of Yasovarman of Kanauj too appears to have been meteoric. His sudden rise to fame and victorious career are referred to in detail in Vakapatiraja's *Gaudavaho* written in Prakrit. According to this source Yasovarman, who had his capital in Kanauj, made extensive conquests in the east, west and south. There is an element of exaggeration in the claims recorded therein, but it seems undeniable that he conquered Magadh and defeated *Vinayaditya*, the contemporary Chalukya king of the Deccan. He was also on friendly relations with *Lalitaditya Muktapida*, the king of Kashmir;

but before long there ensued a war between them as both of them were contenders for paramountcy in Northern India. *Kalhana* refers to a conflict between the two, in consequence of which Yasovarman was defeated. It is not improbable that the end of his paramountcy was the result of his reverses suffered at the hands of the Kashmirian rival. At any rate, there is evidence that Kanauj had changed masters and that Lalitaditya Muktapida held sway over Kanauj in about 731 A.D. But it also appears that Kashmir's hold on Kanauj was not enduring or effective; for *Jayapida Vinayaditya* (779-810 A.D.), a grandson of Lalitaditya, made war on Kanauj, then ruled by either Vajrayudha or his successor Chakrayudha. But while the Kashmir venture did not prove a lasting menace, the *Ayudha* kings of Kanauj were soon confronted with more powerful and determined enemies in the person of *Dharmapala*, the Pala ruler of Bengal, who established his suzerain authority over Kanauj. But the Palas too were not destined to enjoy the fruits of their victory. Other rivals appeared on the scene and Kanauj became the bone of contention among the tripartite powers—the Palas of Bengal, the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan and the Gurjara-Pratiharas, who originally belonged to parts of Rajputana and Malwa. The second phase of the Kanauj empire was dominated by the last-named power who made it the centre of an empire which proved to be more enduring and extensive than that over which Harsha presided about a century and a half ago.

Before we follow the course of the rise and growth of the second Kanauj empire or the fortunes of the tripartite struggle for the possession of Mahodoyasri, it is necessary to indicate, in outline, the principal kingdoms in Northern India in the interval between the fall of the Pushyabhuti empire and the rise of the empire of the Gurjara-Pratiharas. For the sake of convenience, the story of at least one of these kingdoms, namely that of the Palas, will be traced till much later days.

North India in the Post-Harsha Era

Harsha's empire was not co-extensive with Northern India; but there can be little doubt that it was a great unifying force and that its end meant the letting loose of the forces of disunity. As in the years following the decline of the Mauryas and the Guptas in earlier times, so in the days following the end of the Pushyabhuti empire a struggle for Kanauj ensued, imparting a sense of uncertainty heightened by inroads and settlements of foreign hordes from Central Asian regions.

The principal kingdoms into which Northern India was then divided were:

Kashmir: In the post-Harsha period Kashmir was held under the sway of the *Karkota* dynasty founded by *Durlabhavardhana* in the seventh century A.D. His kingdom, among others, was visited by Hiuen Tsang. Nothing is, however, known of his successor *Durlabhaka*. But the third ruler of the dynasty, *Chandrapida*, is said to have sent an envoy to the contemporary Chinese Emperor, seeking his aid against the Arab invaders.

The most well-known and powerful representative of this dynasty was *Lalitaditya Muktapida* (*c.* 724-760 A.D.). The *Rajatarangini* credits him with *digvijaya* in course of which he defeated Yasovarman of Kanauj and the kings of Gauda, Kalinga, Karnata, Konkana, Dwaraka, Avanti and conquered the lands of the Kambojas, Tukharas (Turks?) and the Tibetans. This, being a conventional narration, is not without exaggeration. The claim of his success against Yasovarman and at the expense of the Gaudas, may, however, be accepted as there is corroborative evidence to support it.

For two decades following the death of Lalitaditya the rulers on the Kashmiri throne were weak until his grandson *Vinayaditya Jayapida* (*c.* 779-810 A.D.) attempted to revive the prestige and power of the family. Kalhana refers to his military exploits in Nepal and North Bengal and success against a king of Kanauj who is identified by some as Indrayudha, by others as his successor. To what extent these claims are correct cannot be precisely determined. Generally speaking, the power of Kashmir was steadily on the decline from the ninth century A.D. It persisted even after a new dynasty, viz. that of the *Utpalas*, replaced the Karkotas in the middle of the ninth century. The kingdom no doubt retained its independence till nearly the middle of the fourteenth century, but it had definitely lost its position as an effective power in Northern India and had even sunk into a position of obscurity.

Nepal: Towards the end of the first quarter of the seventh century the throne of Nepal was held by a prince named *Jishnugupta*, who was probably a usurper. He and his successor, *Vishnugupta*, retained the fiction of nominal allegiance to the *Lichchavi* family to whom the throne formerly belonged. The rule of the usurpers was, however, short-lived as about 643 A.D. the throne passed back into the possession of the Lichchavi prince *Narendradeva*. It is possible that the new ruler regained the throne with the aid of the Tibetans. He was also

on friendly terms with the Chinese whom he helped in their war waged against Arunasva, the usurper on the throne of Kanauj after Harsha's death.

Narendradeva was succeeded in turn by his son *Sivadeva* and grandson *Jayadeva* who ruled in the first half of the eighth century. The last-named ruler is credited by the writer of the Pashupati-Temple Inscription with victories won in Anga, Kamarupa, Kanchi and Saurashtra, but such claims are extremely doubtful; on the other hand, it appears that he was unable to completely free himself from Tibetan suzerainty, though of a loose nature. At any rate, the course of domestic events in Nepal produced little or no reaction on the rest of India of which it was an integral part.

Kamarupa: Protected by natural fortifications the mountainous kingdom of Kamarupa was able to preserve its independence for many years till the fourth century A.D. when it was obliged to acknowledge the paramount authority of Samudragupta. In the days of Harsha Siladitya, the contemporary king of Kamarupa, Kumara *Bhaskarvarman*, enlisted himself on the side of Kanauj and made war on Sasanka, king of the Gaudas, and even occupied the capital city of Karnasuvarna after the latter's death. Kamarupa, like Kanauj, suffered a strange change of fortune, following the death of Harsha. The Tibetan king, Srong-tsan Gampo, who had the major share in putting an end to the rule of the usurper Arunasva in Kanauj, also interfered in Kamarupa and not improbably helped the replacement of the rule of the house of Pushyavarman, following the death of Bhaskaravarman, by that of a usurper, *Salasthambha*, on the throne of Kamarupa. The eastern kingdom since then lived in a state of comparative isolation till its conquest by the Ahoms in the middle of the thirteenth cenutry.

The Pratiharas of Rajputana and Malwa: Their Origin and Rise

Traditional records, both epigraphic and literary, claim that the Pratiharas were descended from the *Ikshvaku* or solar race of the Kshatriyas, the founder of the dynasty being Lakshmana, who acted as Pratihara or door-keeper to his brother, the epic hero Ramachandra. But there are better reasons to suppose that they were foreign immigrants into India and were derived from the Gurjaras who entered India along with or shortly after the Huns. The consideration that the Gurjaras are not mentioned in any Indian record till after the sixth century, that several places situated in areas from

across the N.W. frontier to Rajputana, Gujarat and Malwa have names either ending in or beginning with Gurjara or Gujar and that the names of several early rulers are distinctly non-Indian, lends support to the theory that they came from beyond India and gave names of several places they had settled in. The references in Pala, Rashtrakuta and Muslim records to the Pratiharas as *Gujars* or *Juzrs* also suggest that they were derived from the stock of Gurjaras who, on independent evidence, are regarded as foreigners* in India.

The earliest settlement of the Pratiharas was in Jodhpur. Later a branch of the family advanced southward and set up a principality in Malwa. The first important ruler of the family was *Nagabhata I* who carried his arms to Broach and distinguished himself in battles against the Arabs. *Vatsaraja* (*c.* 738-794 A.D.), a grand-nephew of Nagabhata, raised the fame and power of the family to a great height by his exploits in Rajputana and Eastern India where he found a powerful rival for supremacy in the ruling family of the Palas.

The Palas of Eastern India: Origin and Rise

The origin of the Palas who contended with the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas for paramountcy in Northern India is shrouded in uncertainty. It is probable that they were by race Kshatriya, though not of a monarchical rank. The advent of *Gopala* who was elected king about the middle of the eighth century A.D., marked the end of a period of anarchy from which Bengal had been suffering since the death of Sasanka. Hiuen Tsang who visited Bengal soon after Sasanka's death speaks of four independent kingdoms, viz. Pundravardhana, Karnasuvarna, Samatata and Tamralipti, indicative of the loss of unity so assiduously built up by Sasanka. The evil consequences due to the lack of unifying authority were heightened by foreign inroads led, among others, by ambitious rulers like Yasovarman of Kanauj and Lalitaditya of Kashmir. As a result a state of anarchy and lawlessness, described as *Matsyanyaya*, prevailed for more than a century after Sasanka's death till it was ended by an

*A recent writer, Dr. B. N. Puri (*The Gurjara-Pratiharas of Kanauj*), disputes the theory and concludes: 'The probability is that the Gurjaras, like so many other Indian tribes, were living in obscurity somewhere in Rajputana and it was only when lust for power impelled them to rush headlong that they came into conflict with others and carved out a number of kingdoms which ultimately formed the nucleus of the big Gurjara Empire....Absence of the name Gurjara in early record or literature is no ground for doubting their indigenous origin.'

act of public-spirited intervention. We are informed on the authority of the Khalimpur copper-plate that the people, in their bid for a strong central authority, elected, on their free choice, Gopala as their king. The peoples' nominee justified the confidence placed in him. Gopala who ruled for 20 years (*c.* 750-770 A.D.) gave the kingdom much-needed peace and consolidated his rule so well as to enable his son and successor, *Dharmapala*, to emulate the example of Sasanka and make a bid for paramountcy in North India in which he was destined to win greater success than the former king of the Gaudas.

Tripartite Struggle for Kanauj

The main interest in the history of Northern India from the middle of the eighth century A.D. onward centres round the struggle for Kanauj which had supplanted Pataliputra as the centre of political gravity in Aryavarta. The contenders were the Pratiharas, the Palas and the Rashtrakutas. The last-named power, not content with their primacy in the Deccan, looked forward to the extension of their authority north of the Vindhyas. The struggle, being a protracted one, had its ups and downs and Kanauj changed masters more than once till the Pratiharas finally outrivalled the Palas and the Rashtrakutas and built up an empire which proved to be more lasting and extensive than that of the Pushyabhutis.

The rise of the Pratiharas is linked up with the Arab challenge in Sind and Western India. The Pratihara chief *Nagabhata I* acquired fame by wresting Broach and the adjoining areas from the Muslim invaders. His successor, *Vatsaraja*, in an attempt to consolidate and expand Pratihara authority, came into conflict with the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan and the Palas of Bengal. According to Rashtrakuta records Vatsaraja won initial victory over the king of Gauda and Vanga but had to suffer reverses at the hands of the Rashtrakuta army led by *Dhruva-Nirupama* and flee from Malwa. Vatsaraja's successor, *Nagabhata II* (*c.* 805-833 A.D.), however, in an attempt to retrieve the fortunes of the family, allied himself with the rulers of Sindhu, Andhra, Vidarbha and Kalinga. He was the first among the Pratihara rulers to have occupied Kanauj. He is also credited with success against the Pala army led by *Dharmapala*. But as in the case of his predecessor, success eluded him soon after; for, like Vatsaraja, Nagabhata II was forced to accept defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakuta king, *Govinda III*. The latter, however, could not follow up his

victory, being compelled to return to the Deccan to meet a serious threat in the home-kingdom. The defeat of Nagabhata II on the one hand and the withdrawal of the Rashtrakutas on the other enabled Dharmapala to reappear on the scene. We learn from Pala inscriptions that Dharmapala defeated Indraraja or Indrayudha and placed on the throne of Kanauj a nominee of his own, named *Chakrayudha*. This was solemnised at an assembly attended by princes of Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Yavana, Avanti, Gandhara and Kira. This indicates that these rulers of Northern and Central India acknowledged Dharmapala's suzerain authority and that Kanauj accepted the position of a vassal kingdom under the paramount authority of the Palas. *Devapala* (810-850 A.D.) who succeeded Dharmapala on the throne continued to enjoy this pre-eminence till about the middle of the ninth century. He is credited with having won victories, among others, against the Gurjaras. But after the death of Devapala there took place a revival of Pratihara power. This was effected by *Mihira Bhoja* (836-885 A.D.). His bid for the recovery of Pratihara supremacy was facilitated by the fact that the Rashtrakutas were then too involved in the affairs of the Deccan to think in terms of intervention in the north and the Pala ruler *Narayanapala* (850-908 A.D.) who succeeded Devapala was engaged in a life and death struggle with his neighbours in the north-east and the south. The preoccupations of his enemies enabled Bhoja to make renewed efforts for the consolidation and expansion of his authority. Towards the close of his reign Bhoja's empire embraced extensive areas in North and Central India. It was destined to grow still more, in power and extent, under his successor *Mahendrapala* (*c.* 885-910 A.D.). Under him the imperial authority of the Pratiharas was acknowledged over the extensive area from Karnal in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the east.

For three generations after *Amoghavarsha I* (814-877 A.D.), the Rashtrakutas did not dispute the authority of the Pratiharas. But the Rashtrakuta enmity gained a momentum when *Indra III* (915-917 A.D.) came to the throne. Within six years of the death of Mahendrapala, the Rashtrakuta army traversed the whole distance from the Deccan and appeared before Kanauj. *Mahipala* whose authority had considerably weakened because of dissensions within the Pratihara family was forced to seek safety in flight. Kanauj passed into the possession of the Rashtrakutas; but as on the previous occasion the victorious power was not destined to enjoy the fruits of

its victory. There is evidence that Mahipala was restored to the throne, though not to his former power. In 940 A.D. the Rashtrakutas once again renewed their incursions. Within the next ten years the once mighty empire of the Pratiharas which had started its headlong career of decline from 916-917 A.D., entered its final stage of disintegration. The second phase of the empire of Kanauj thus came to an end after a career of nearly two centuries.

The Pratihara Empire: An Assessment

The empire of the Pratiharas was the first empire built by the Rajputs who dominated the Indian scene for about five centuries and a half from the death of Harshavardhana to the advent of the Delhi Sultanate. Vincent Smith describes the period as 'the Rajput period' of Indian history. This has become an oft-repeated maxim which is only partly correct. The Rajputs had their activities confined to Western and Northern India and were compelled to leave the eastern part of the country to the Palas who were a power to reckon with in contemporary times.

The foundations of the Pratihara empire were laid by Nagabhata I who came into prominence by his successful exploits against the Arabs. The Pratihara empire, it has been claimed, owed its birth to a struggle against aggressive Islam which sought to penetrate into Western India through Sind. For about two centuries of its glorious existence the empire never forgot its historic mission. The Arab writer, Suleiman, referring to Bhoja Pratihara, admitted that 'there is no greater foe of the Muhammedan faith than he.'

Not only did the Pratihara empire serve as a bulwark against foreign invasion, but in doing so, it also helped the continuity of early Indian culture and civilisation. In the two centuries preceding the rise of the Kanauj empire there had taken place a large influx of foreign people like the Huns and Gurjaras. As a result of the contact of the older culture of India with that of the newcomers, a civilisation, partly ancient in character, and partly alien in spirit, was coming into existence. At the same time there also took place a gradual amalgamation of the newcomers with the older people. As a consequence a new society came into existence in which the Rajputs in general, and the Pratiharas in particular, played an important part and replaced the Kshatriyas of older days.

It was while the society was in a fluid state that the Arabs had begun to knock at the gates of India. If at that time the Pratihara empire

had failed to stop them, it is very likely that the new civilisation and the new society would have been destroyed once and for all. In that case early Indian civilisation would have been as dead as the ancient civilisation of Egypt or Mesopotamia.

Besides the work of defence and conservation the Pratihara empire should also be given credit for helping in the creation of later Indian arts, architecture and literature. In the domains of these peaceful pursuits the Pratiharas were pioneers of the mediaeval Indian system, for it was during this period of their domination that the characteristic features of later medieval works of art and architecture were laid down. Generally speaking, those of the earlier period appealed more on account of their massive features while those of the later days owed their importance to the fineness of their conception and exquisite workmanship. It was during Pratihara rule that this transition seems to have taken place. In literature also the period is important as it saw the evolution of the vernaculars of the country.

The decline of the Pratihara empire, at first sight, seems to indicate that the unity of North India was lost and in place of one imperial power half a dozen states emerged and began to quarrel among themselves for overlordship. But in reality the ideal of unity was not lost; it did survive the downfall of the Pratihara empire. This is indicated by the fact that each one of these struggling principalities was inspired by the ideal of securing for itself an imperial position similar to that of the Pratiharas. Thus the legacy of imperial unity left by the Pratiharas continued even after their decline. It is in this ideal that we should seek the true significance of the inter-state struggles in North India in the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D.

Decline of the Pala Kingdom

The Pala ascendancy entered a phase of chronic decline after the death of Devapala in the middle of the ninth century A.D. None of his two successors, *Vigrahapala I* (*c.* 850-854 A.D.) and *Narayanapala* (*c.* 854-898 A.D.), is credited with any military success. On the other hand it appears that the Pala kingdom was invaded by the Rashtrakuta army led by Amoghavarsha I who claims to have extracted tribute from the vanquished Pala monarch. The Rashtrakutas were not the only enemies to be dealt with. It also appears from Pratihara records that Mihira Bhoja advanced to the borders of Magadh and won victories against his Pala contemporary. Assam and Orissa too freed themselves from the suzerain authority of the Palas. During the

next half a century (908-960 A.D.) the Pala kings had to remain content with their hold on Magadh and North Bengal.

The dissolution of the Pratihara empire in the middle of the tenth century did not, however, mean any respite for the Palas. They were now confronted with new enemies—the Chandellas and the Kalachuris, both of whom led successful raids against the kingdom of *Gopala II* and *Vigrahapala II*. The next ruler *Mahipala I* (*c.* 988-1038 A.D.) was, however, able to retrieve the fortunes of the family to some extent, though Bengal suffered an attack sponsored by the Cholas at the instance of Rajendra Chola and another led by the Kalachuri monarch Gangeyadeva. Under Mahipala's two successors, *Nayapala* (*c.* 1038-1055 A.D.) and *Vigrahapala III* (*c.* 1055-1070 A.D.), Bengal became a victim to Kalachuri and Chalukya aggression committed respectively by Lakshmikarna and Someswara I.

An interesting episode in the history of Bengal was the deposition of *Mahipala II* in consequence of a rebellion headed by the *Kaibartta* leader, Divya. For two generations the rebels held power till *Ramapala*, the younger brother of the dethroned Pala ruler, recovered the throne, thus restoring the authority of the Palas. His rule extended over North and East Bengal and Assam. He pushed his arms as far south as Kalinga where he came into conflict with Anantavarman Choda Ganga. He also waged war on the west with the Gahadavala king, Govindachandra.

His successors, however, failed to maintain the kingdom intact. It gradually shrank in extent and power till by the middle of the twelfth century it was confined to Central and Eastern Bihar and a portion of North Bengal. The remnants of their power were finally destroyed by the Senas. The historic rule of the Palas came to an end after an existence of nearly four centuries.

The Palas of Eastern India: An Assessment

The Palas occupy a position of importance in the history of Eastern India comparable to that of the Pratiharas in Aryavarta. The manner of their rise to power, through free choice of the 'Prakriti', in itself, is a phenomenon of singular importance. Yet another source of their importance is derived from the fact that the Palas were the only dynasty which produced a nearly unbroken succession of kings for about four centuries. To them again belongs the credit of having completed the task begun by Sasanka, viz. the establishment of Eastern India as the seat of paramountcy. Under Dharmapala and

Devapala the authority of the Palas was recognised over extensive dominions including Bengal, Bihar, Kanauj, Punjab, Rajputana, Malwa and Berar. The Arab merchant, Suleiman (851 A.D.), testifies to the large and powerful military organisation of the Pala king Devapala, whose army, according to him, was more numerous than that of the Rashtrakutas and the Pratiharas. According to his estimate the Pala king took '50,000 elephants in his military campaigns, and ten to fifteen thousand men in his army were employed in washing the cloths.' The reputation of the Pala monarchs like Dharmapala and Devapala travelled far beyond India. We are told that King Balaputradeva of the Sailendra dynasty of Java and Sumatra sent an envoy to him requesting the grant of five villages for the endowment of a monastery built by him at Nalanda.

The achievements of the Palas were not restricted to the military sphere alone; they were liberal patrons of culture understood in its widest sense. Literature, both Sanskrit and vernacular, flourished under their patronage. Apart from Buddhistic Tantric writings the period saw the development of Sanskrit literature, enriched with the writings of Bhavadeva Bhatta and Jimutavahana. The local vernacular growing out of Magadhi Prakrit and Apabhransa dialects also made remarkable progress during this period. The *Charyapadas*, discovered in Nepal by the late Dr. Haraprasad Shastri, are regarded as the oldest surviving specimens of Bengali literature.

The Palas were devout Buddhists and under their patronage 'Buddhism found a safe refuge in Bihar and Bengal after it had ceased to have any footing in the rest of India, with the exception of Kashmir, Nepal and a few isolated regions.' Among the monasteries built by them were those of Odantapuri, Somapuri and Vikramasila, which grew up to be important academic centres attended by students not only from different parts of India but also from Tibet and neighbouring countries. Mahayana Buddhism, under the direct patronage of the Pala monarchs, made its influence felt in Tibet and in the islands of S.E. Asia. A number of Buddhist scholars and preachers like Santarakshita, Dharmakirti, Vimalamitra, Santigarbha, Padmasambhava, Kamalasila and, above all, Dipankara Srijnana Atisa, did much to propagate the religion in Tibet. Their work is 'a positive testimony to the intimate connection between the two countries and the profound influence exercised by India upon the development of religious thought and literature, as well as many other aspects of culture in Tibet.'

The Imperial Pratiharas

Nagabhata I

Brother (Name unknown)

- Kakustha
- Devaraya
  - Vatsaraja
    - Nagabhata II
      - Ramabhadra
        - Bhoja I
          - Mahendrapala
            - Mahipala I

The Palas of Eastern India

Dayitavishnu

- Vapyata
  - Gopala I
    - Dharmapala
      - Tribhuvanapala
      - Devapala
        - Rajyapala
    - Vakpala
      - Jayapala
        - Vigrahapala I (Surapala I)
          - Narayanapala
            - Rajyapala
              - Gopala II
                - Vigrahapala II
                  - Mahipala I
                    - Nayapala
                      - Vigrahapala III
                        - Mahipala II
                        - Surapala II
                        - Ramapala

The Palas were also great builders, though the specimens of their architecture have not survived. Vincent Smith mentions the names of two artists, Dhiman and Vitapala, who acquired the highest fame. Sculpture pieces, however, have been traced in fairly large numbers. They were exported to S.E. Asian countries and to Nepal and Tibet whose art was largely influenced by the Pala style and technique.

South India: Post-Gupta Age

With the successive foreign inroads in India following the decline of the Guptas, the centre of interest shifts southward where the process of assimiliation of the Aryan culture with the Dravidian pattern on the one hand, and the conflict of two distinct geographical regions, viz. the Western Deccan and the Tamil land, for political supremacy south of the Vindhyas, on the other, received a new impetus. For two hundred years from the sixth to eighth century the Chalukyas and the Pallavas contested for supremacy. This was followed by the Rashtrakuta bid for ascendancy. Not content with their supremacy in the Deccan they attempted to make their power felt as far north as Kanauj. The decline of the Rashtrakutas about the third quarter of the tenth century was synchronous with the advent of the Cholas as the foremost power in South India. Their ascendancy which saw the crystallisation of Tamil culture lasted throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The Chalukyas: The origin of the Chalukyas who held sway over extensive areas in the Deccan for about two centuries is a subject on which opinion among historians is divided. While one school is inclined to the view that they were descended from the Kshatriyas of Ayodhya, others hold that they were 'connected with the Capas, and so with the foreign Gurjara tribe, of which the Capas were a branch, and it seems to be probable that they emigrated from Rajputana to the Deccan.' A conclusive finding on their origin is still awaited.

The first two names in the list of the Chalukya royal family are those of *Jayasinha* and his son *Ranaraga*. Little authentic is known about their achievements. Ranaraga's son, *Maharaja Pulakesin I* (*c.* 535-566 A.D.), was the real founder of the Chalukya kingdom. Early inscriptions confer on him the titles of *Satyasraya Ranavikrama* and represent him as the performer of the *Hiranyagarbha mahadana*. His rule extended over the modern Bijapur district with its capital at Vatapi (modern Badami). His successor *Kirtivarman I* (566-597 A.D.) enlarged the ancestral kingdom to a considerable extent,

though the claims of his success in Magadh, Bengal and against the Kadambas, the Cholas and the Pandyas recorded in Chalukya inscriptions seem to be exaggerated. His brother *Mangalesa* (597-610 A.D.) who followed him on the throne conquered the Ratnagiri district in the Konkan and reduced the Kalachuris of northern Deccan. But his last few years were troubled with a dispute over succession. Mangalesa's attempt to nominate his successor was resisted by his nephew Pulakesin II.

On accession to the throne, Pulakesin II (620-642 A.D.) assumed the style of *Parameswara-Sri-Prithvi-Vallabha-Satyasraya*. The early years of his reign were spent in combating the chaos and confusion which invariably followed the civil war preceding his accession. By adopting a policy of conciliation alternating with coercion he succeeded in restoring order before long. Once his authority was consolidated Pulakesin launched on a career of conquest at the expense of the neighbouring powers. The *Aihole Prasasti* dated 634-635 A.D. gives a detailed record of his military exploits against the Kadambas of Vanavasi, the Gangas of South Mysore, the Mauryas of Konkan, the Latas, the Malavas and the Gurjaras. The same source also informs us that Pulakesin won a victory over Harshavardhana of Kanauj. Hiuen Tsang too gives us the same impression. The rulers of Maha-kosala and Kalinga also submitted to his authority. Pistapura was reduced and placed under the charge of Yuvaraja *Kubja Vishnu-vardhana* as the viceroy of the newly-conquered region. Farther south the victorious Chalukya monarch advanced into the heart of the Pallava kingdom and defeated its ruler Mahendravarman I (600-630 A.D.). We are also informed that the *Digvijaya* over, Pulakesin II crossed the Kaveri and entered into friendly diplomatic relations with the Cholas, the Keralas and the Pandyas before returning to his capital.

Pulakesin's reputation spread even beyond India. He is said to have exchanged diplomatic missions with King Khursu II of Persia. Hiuen Tsang who visited the Chalukya kingdom in the reign of Pulakesin, in testifying to the prowess of the king, observes: 'The king, in consequence of his possessing his men and elephants, treats his neighbours with contempt. His plans and undertakings are widespread, and his beneficent actions are felt over a great distance. His subjects obey him with perfect submission.'

Unfortunately Pulakesin did not enjoy the fruits of his victory for long. In 642 he was defeated and probably killed by his Pallava

rival, Narasimhavarman I, who even captured the Chalukya capital Vatapi, assuming the title of Vatapikonda. The defeat of Pulakesin II, however, meant the eclipse of Chalukya supremacy for the time being; it recovered before long under his successor *Vikramaditya I* (655-681 A.D.). He won success in the renewed war with the Pallavas and recovered the territories recently lost to them. He is also said to have humbled the power of the Cholas, Pandyas and Keralas. The work towards recovery of Chalukya power was carried on with great vigour by his two successors, *Vinayaditya* (681-696 A.D.) and *Vijayaditya* (696-733 A.D.). There is no doubt an element of exaggeration in Chalukya records on the extent and scope of their military exploits, but it appears beyond dispute that Vinayaditya who had helped his father in the wars against the Pallavas won fame by victory achieved over 'the Lord of the whole of Uttarapatha', who has been identified with the later Gupta monarch, Adityasena. *Vikramaditya II* (733-746 A.D.) who succeeded Vijayaditya won further glory for the family by defeating the old rivals, the Pallavas, and forcing the Cholas, the Pandyas and the people of Malabar to submit to his authority. His other notable achievement was the defeat inflicted on the Arabs when they made an attempt to conquer Southern Gujarat.

But the period of Chalukya supremacy did not long survive the death of Vikramaditya II. His son *Kirtivarman II* (746-757 A.D.) suffered reverses from the Rashtrakutas and lost Maharashtra. By the middle of the eighth century A.D. the supremacy enjoyed by the Chalukyas gave way to the Rashtrakuta claim to ascendancy in the Deccan.

The Pallavas: The main interest in the political history of South India for two centuries (sixth to eighth century A.D.) centres round the Chalukya-Pallava contest for supremacy. The Pallavas rose into prominence towards the close of the sixth century A.D. under *Sinhavishnu Avanisinha*. He is credited with the conquest of territories up to the Kaveri at the expense of the Cholas and is further said to have defeated the Pandyas, Kalabhras and the Malavas.

The reign of his successor *Mahendravarman* (*c.* 600-630 A.D.) marked an acute phase in the Pallava-Chalukya struggle. It was a geographical and not a dynastic struggle and this may be seen 'from the fact that the organised monarchy of the south continued to meet the powers of the Maharashtra country on the banks of the Krishna right down to the battle of Talikota in 1565.' In the conflict thus waged Mahendravarman was defeated by Chalukya Pulakesin II

who took away from him the province of Vengi. His successor *Narasimhavarman* (*c.* 630-668 A.D.), however, avenged the defeat, forced the Pallava antagonist to suffer reverses in three successive battles and captured the enemy capital of Vatapi. Another remarkable achievement of Narasimhavarman was a successful naval expedition sent against Ceylon which resulted in the installation of a nominee of his own on the throne of the island-kingdom. Hiuen Tsang who visited the Pallava kingdom in the reign of Narasimhavarman writes in highly complimentary terms of the kingdom and its people.

Mahendravarman II who succeeded Narasimhavarman had a brief and uneventful reign of two years (*c.* 668-670 A.D.). The next ruler *Parameswaravarman* (*c.* 670-695 A.D.) is credited in Pallava records with victories against the old enemies, viz. the Chalukyas, culminating in the capture of the capital city of Vatapi. But it is difficult to determine exactly how far these claims are correct, since similar claims of success are made in Chalukya records by the Vatapi rulers. What is beyond dispute is that the reign of Parameswaravarman saw a renewed phase of Pallava-Chalukya struggle which was, in all probability, of a fluctuating nature.

In the second half of the eighth century the Pallava power was considerably weakened in consequence of dissensions within the royal family and rivalry for power. It appears from the evidence of inscriptions that *Nandivarman*, one of the members of the family of Sinhavishnu, was chosen as the new king. But this did not avert the danger, for the Chalukyas appeared on the scene once again under their king Vikramaditya II and took Kanchi under occupation. Though Nandivarman (730-795 A.D.) recovered the capital, he was confronted with other enemies like the Tamils, the Pandyas and the Gangas, and above all, the Rashtrakutas. Towards the beginning of the ninth century A.D. the reigning Pallava prince *Dantivarman* (*c.* 796-846 A.D.) was compelled to accept defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakuta king, Govinda III. The Pallava power did not recover from this reverse and finally succumbed to the attacks of the Cholas (890 A.D.). The defeat of the Pallava ruler *Aparajitavarman* at the hands of the Chola king Aditya I virtually drew the curtain on the independent kingdom of the Pallavas.

The Rashtrakutas: The origin of the Rashtrakutas, like that of many other contemporary dynasties of North and South India, is a matter of controversy. Traditional accounts claim that they were descended from the ancient race of *Yadu*. There is another theory which seeks to

connect them with the *Rathikas* or *Rastikas* mentioned in Asokan edicts. Several Chalukya records claim that the Rashtrakutas were an agricultural people living in the Andhra country. It has also been suggested that the Rashtrakutas were derived from the Rathors of the North. In the face of these diverse claims it has recently been suggested that 'the most acceptable view seems to be that dynastic name of the Rashtrakutas arose like the dynastic names Pratihara, Peshwa and many others from an official designation.' It is of interest to note that many Chalukya and Rashtrakuta records mention officials styled as Rashtrakuta, indicating the head of a *Rashtra* or district.

The foundation of the Rashtrakuta power was laid in the middle of the eighth century by *Dantidurga* who conquered Maharashtra by overthrowing the Chalukyas to whom it belonged. He is also credited with having won victories against a number of neighbouring powers which included the ruling houses of Kanchi, Kalinga, South Kosala, Malava and Lata.

Krishna I (768-772 A.D.) who succeeded Dantidurga further consolidated the authority of the Rashtrakutas. He gave the final blow to the declining power of the Chalukyas, marched against and occupied the capital of the Gangas of Mysore and defeated the Chalukyas of Vengi. Another prince whom Krishna is said to have engaged in battle and defeated was Rahappa whose identity, however, is uncertain.

The next ruler *Govinda II* (773-779 A.D.), who had earlier distinguished himself in his father's life-time during the war with the Eastern Chalukyas, on accession to the throne unfortunately neglected royal duties, showed lack of vigour and was dethroned. His younger brother *Dhruva Nirupama* (779-793 A.D.) who replaced him proved to be a vigorous ruler. He defeated the Gangas, the Pallavas and the Eastern Chalukyas and thus gained for his kingdom ascendancy in the Deccan. Not content with this, Dhruva made a bid for extending his supremacy north of the Vindhyas. His efforts met with remarkable success. The Prahitara king Vatsaraja suffered at his hands a crushing defeat and fled to the deserts of Rajputana. He then engaged in battle with Dharmapala, the Pala king of Eastern India, and defeated him. But Dhruva was unable to follow up his victories and compelled to retire to his capital in order to settle the order of succession.

Govinda III (793-814 A.D.) who succeeded Dhruva to the throne

emulated his father's example and undertook campaigns against the Pala and Pratihara rivals for Kanauj. But while he was engaged in campaigning in the north, he received the alarming news that a grand coalition had been formed in the south by the former enemies, viz. the Cholas, Pandyas, Pallavaş and the Gangas. Govinda hastened back, leaving his work in the north half done, to meet the challenge nearer home and forced the dissolution of the coalition.

The next ruler *Amoghavarsha I* (*c.* 814-877 A.D.) has a reign more long than eventful. He succeeded as a minor. This was taken advantage of by several feudatories who rebelled and even drove him from the throne. But he regained power. As he came of age he consolidated his position, waged war against the Chalukyas of Vengi, but unlike Dhruva and Govinda he was unable to play any effective role in the contest for the possession of Kanauj, leaving it to be fought between the Palas and the Pratiharas. The Arab merchant, Suleiman, however, pays him compliments and says that he was one of the four greatest rulers of the world, the other being the Caliph of Baghdad, the Emperor of China and the Emperor of Constantinople. The pro-Muslim policy of the Rashtrakutas was probably the outcome of rivalry between the Rashtrakutas and the Pratiharas, the latter being known as the bitterest enemies of the Muslims.

Amoghavarsha's successor, Krishna II (*c.* 877-913 A.D.), is known to have engaged in hostilities with the Eastern Chalukyas on the one hand and the Paramaras of Malwa on the other. But these were far from decisive. The next ruler, *Indra III* (915-917 A.D.), had a brief reign but he won fame by defeating the Pratihara ruler Mahipala and compelled him to leave the capital. The Rashtrakuta campaign of 916-917 A.D. marked the beginning of the decline of the imperial Pratiharas. But the successors of Indra III were weak and for about two decades the Rashtrakutas were compelled to suspend their ventures in North India.

The last important representative of the Rashtrakuta dynasty was *Krishna III* (*c.* 939-968 A.D.). He renewed the conflict with the imperial Pratiharas and wrested from them the possession of Kalanjar and Chitrakuta. In the south he made war on the Cholas and occupied the cities of Kanchi and Tanjore and marched as far south as Ramesvaram where he set up a pillar in celebration of his victory. Thus unlike any of his predecessors, he was the lord of the whole of the Deccan (*Sakala-dakshina-dig-adhipati*) in the full sense of the term. No other Rashtrakuta king was the overlord of the entire

Deccan in so complete a sense of the term as Krishna III was in 965 A.D.

The death of Krishna III in about 968 A.D. was the signal for the decline of the Rashtrakuta empire. His successors were weak. His younger brother *Khottiga* who succeeded him was challenged in battle and defeated by the Paramara feudatory, Siyaka, who even occupied the capital city of Malkhed. *Karkka II* who succeeded Khottiga was unable to check the trend towards decline and was compelled to suffer the humiliation of defeat at the hands of one of his feudatories, viz. Taila II of the Chalukya family (973 A.D.). This marked the end of the existence of the Rashtrakutas as an independent power. For two hundred years they had enjoyed a position of undisputed supremacy such as no other South Indian power had enjoyed before or was destined to enjoy again till the rise of the Marathas nearly eight centuries later.

The Eastern Chalukyas: The history of the Eastern Chalukyas, known also as the Chalukyas of Vengi, virtually starts with the appointment by Pulakesin II of his younger brother *Kubja Vishnuvardhana* as viceroy of the newly conquered areas of Pistapura and its neighbourhood (615 A.D.). In the generation after Vishnuvardhana his son and successor, *Jayasinha I*, proclaimed independence. He and his successors are commonly known as the Eastern Chalukyas or the Chalukyas of Vengi where they set up their capital. For about four centuries they ruled over a large and compact state including the Andhra country and some parts of Kalinga. Some of the rulers of this dynasty like *Vijayaditya I* and *Vijayaditya II* who flourished in the ninth century won military glories by defeating the contemporary Rashtrakuta and Ganga kings. Towards the close of the tenth century A.D. the eastern kingdom of the Chalukyas fell a victim to Chola aggression led by Rajaraja I. By the third quarter of the eleventh century the kingdom of Vengi was absorbed within the larger and growing kingdom of the Cholas.

The Cholas: The renewed phase of Chola political activities date from the ninth century A.D. which saw the decline and downfall of the Pallavas and the Chalukyas who had dominated the South Indian scene for more than two centuries. The Rashtrakutas had made their advent felt in the Deccan while the Cholas chose the land farther south lying between Madras in the north and the Kaveri in the south.

The founder of the Chola greatness was *Vijayalaya* (*c.* 846-871 A.D.)

who made Tanjore the capital of his newly-founded kingdom. His son *Aditya I* (*c.* 871-907 A.D.) enlarged the ancestral kingdom by conquests at the expense of the Pallavas and the Western Gangas. The next ruler *Parantaka I* (907-953 A.D.) won great distinction by extending his sway as far south as Nellore at the expense of the Pallavas. He is also credited with having led an expedition against Ceylon, though it did not prove a success. This rapid rise of the Chola power alarmed the Rashtrakutas whose king Krishna III, aided by the Gangas, took up arms against the Cholas and defeated them at the battle of Takkolam. This meant a great blow to the power of the Cholas.

But within thirty years the Cholas not only recovered their power but were well on the way to establish their suzerainty in South India. This was largely the work of *Rajaraja I* (*c.* 985-1016 A.D.) who defeated the Pandyas, the Cheras, the Gangas and the Western Chalukyas and made at their expense extensive conquests. He even invaded Ceylon and occupied its northern part. The Eastern Chalukya king of Vengi also felt the weight of his arms and recognised him as his suzerain. To him is also assigned the conquest of Kalinga and the occupation of 'the old islands of the sea numbering 12,000' which have been generally identified with the Laccadives and the Maladives. He was thus the first among the Chola monarchs to have set up an empire which was partly maritime.

The fame of Rajaraja was destined to be surpassed by that of his son *Rajendra I* (*c.* 1014-1044 A.D.) who had been associated with the administration of his father and his military achievements. On accession to full-fledged power he launched on a career of vigorous conquest. His first achievement was the completion of the conquest of Ceylon. He also waged war with the Western Chalukyas though it does not appear certain that the Cholas had won any decisive victory. Rajendra was, however, more fortunate in his exploits in the north. His armies marched in triumph as far as the Ganges. According to claims recorded in Chola inscriptions the kings of Bengal, Orissa and South Kosala were compelled to suffer reverses at the hands of his army. By way of commemorating his victories Rajendra took the title of Gongaikonda. But these exploits were more spectacular than substantial, for the northern dominions did not become a part of the Chola empire. The great Chola king is also said to have led his fleet across the seas to Malay Peninsula.

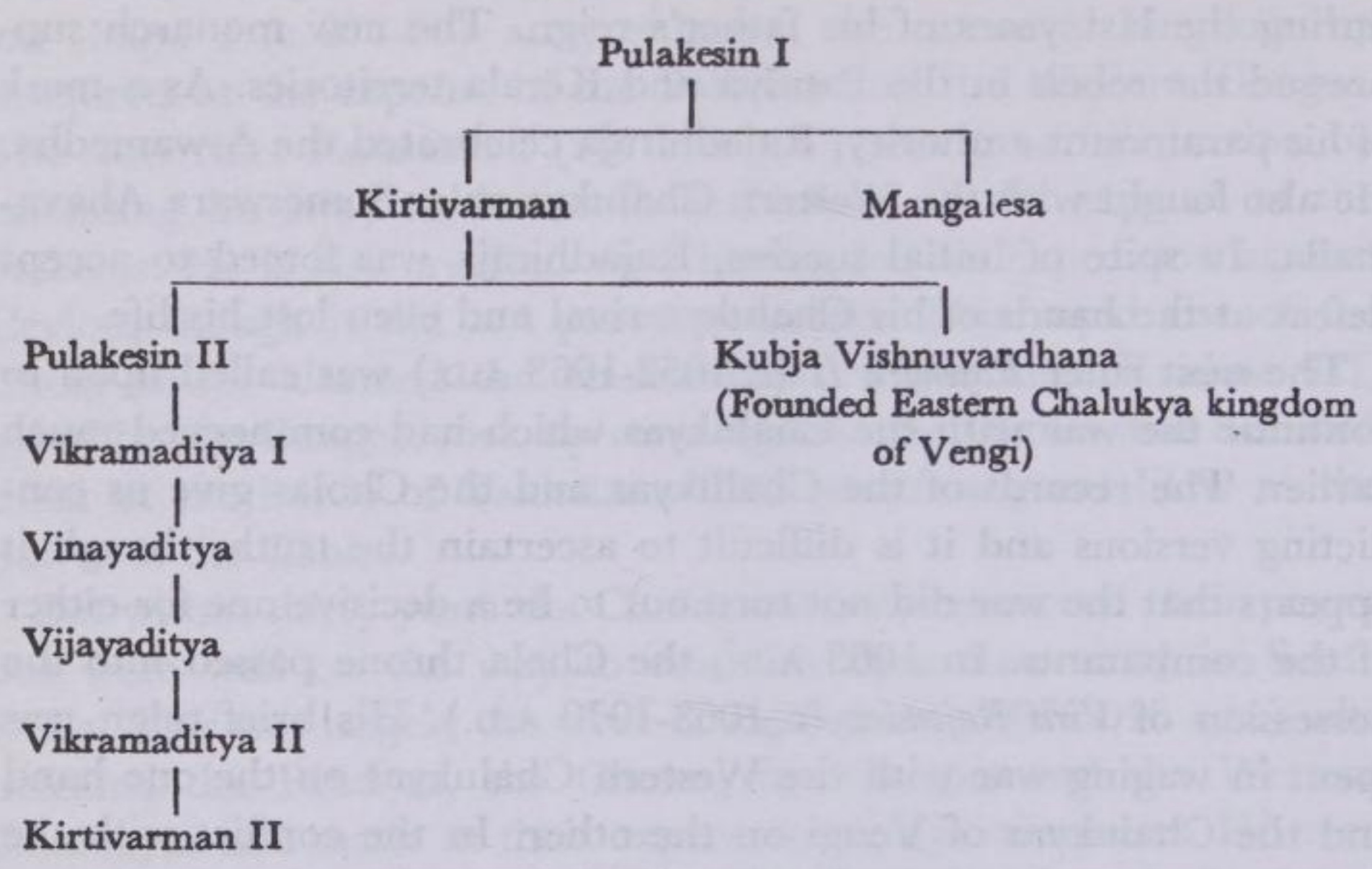
His successor *Rajadhiraja I* (*c.* 1044-1052 A.D.) was called upon to

deal with the rebellions which had begun to rear their head even during the last years of his father's reign. The new monarch suppressed the rebels in the Pandya and Kerala territories. As a mark of his paramount authority, Rajadhiraja celebrated the Aswamedha. He also fought with the Western Chalukya ruler Someswara Ahavamalla. In spite of initial success, Rajadhiraja was forced to accept defeat at the hands of his Chalukya rival and even lost his life.

The next ruler *Rajendra II* (*c.* 1052-1063 A.D.) was called upon to continue the war with the Chalukyas which had commenced much earlier. The records of the Chalukyas and the Cholas give us conflicting versions and it is difficult to ascertain the truth, though it appears that the war did not turn out to be a decisive one for either of the combatants. In 1063 A.D., the Chola throne passed into the possession of *Vira Rajendra* (*c.* 1063-1070 A.D.). His brief reign was spent in waging war with the Western Chalukyas on the one hand and the Chalukyas of Vengi on the other. In the conflict with the latter and also against the Pandyas he claims to have won success.

A period of confusion, partly due to rivalry among the Chola princes, followed the death of Vira Rajendra. This was ended by the usurpation of *Kulottunga* who combined in his veins the blood of the Cholas and the Chalukyas. His reign (1070-1122 A.D.) saw the fusion of the Chola and the Eastern Chalukya dominions into one political unit. He fought with success against the Pandyas and the Keralas besides the Paramaras of Malwa. But he could not prevent the defection of Southern Mysore and the overseas possessions. His successes were, however, unable to check the progress towards decline. The Pandyas recovered their possessions formerly lost to the Cholas and even overran the Chola capital. New enemies also appeared on the scene. They were the Hoysalas and the Kakatiyas. Feudatories and provincial governors took advantage of the decline of the Cholas to set themselves up as independent rulers. By the third quarter of the thirteenth century the disintegration of the Chola empire was complete.

THE CHALUKYAS OF VATAPI



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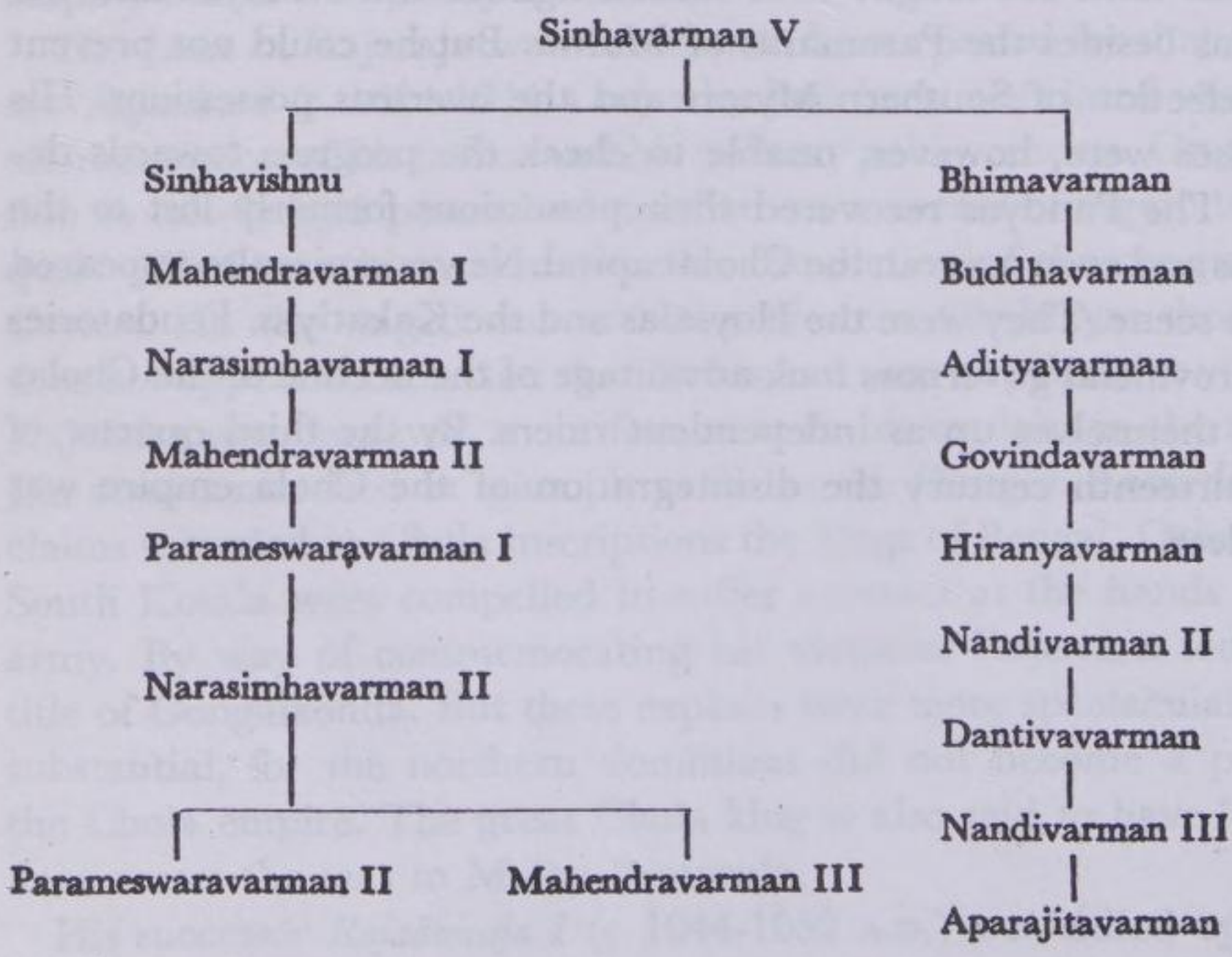
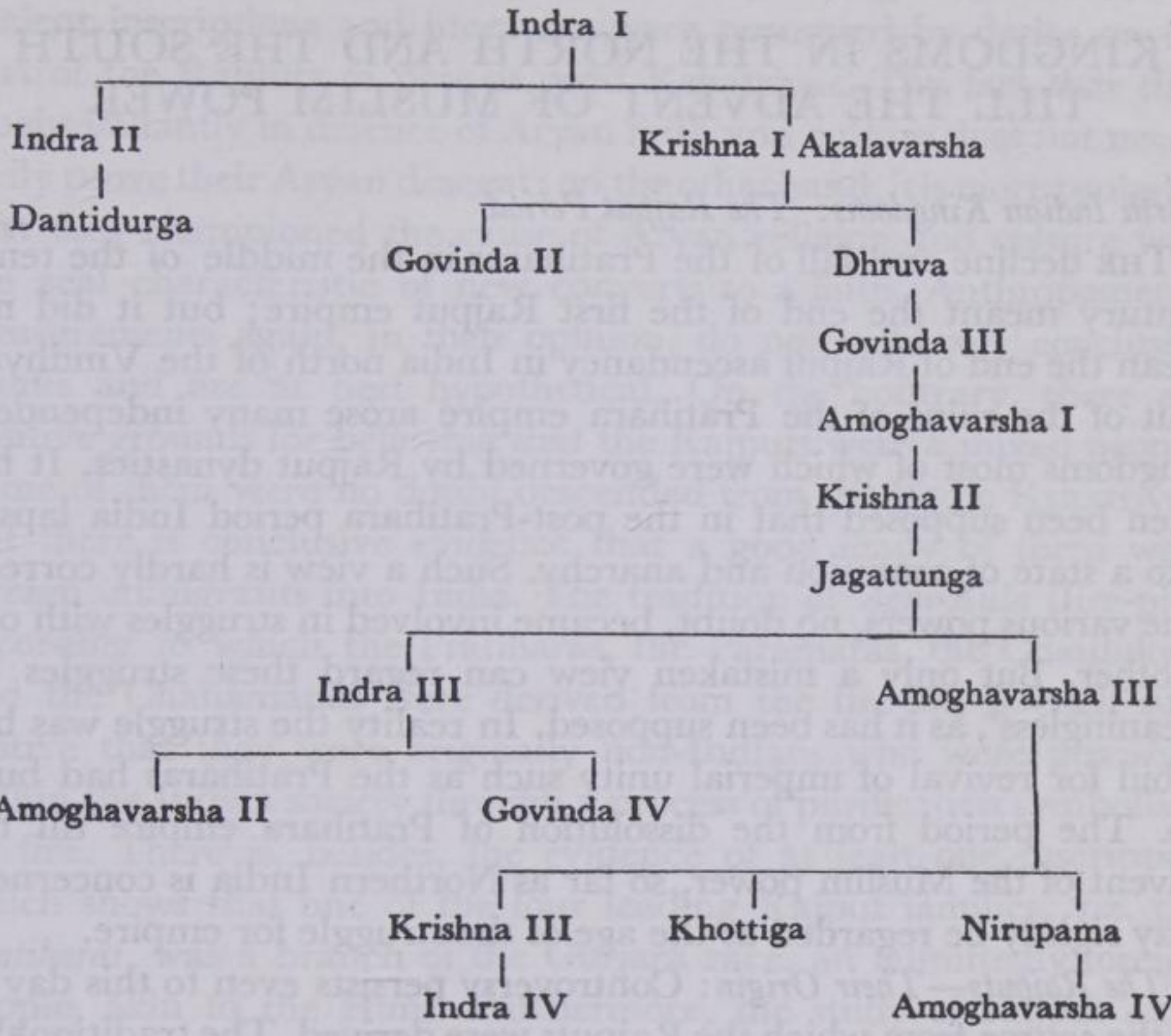
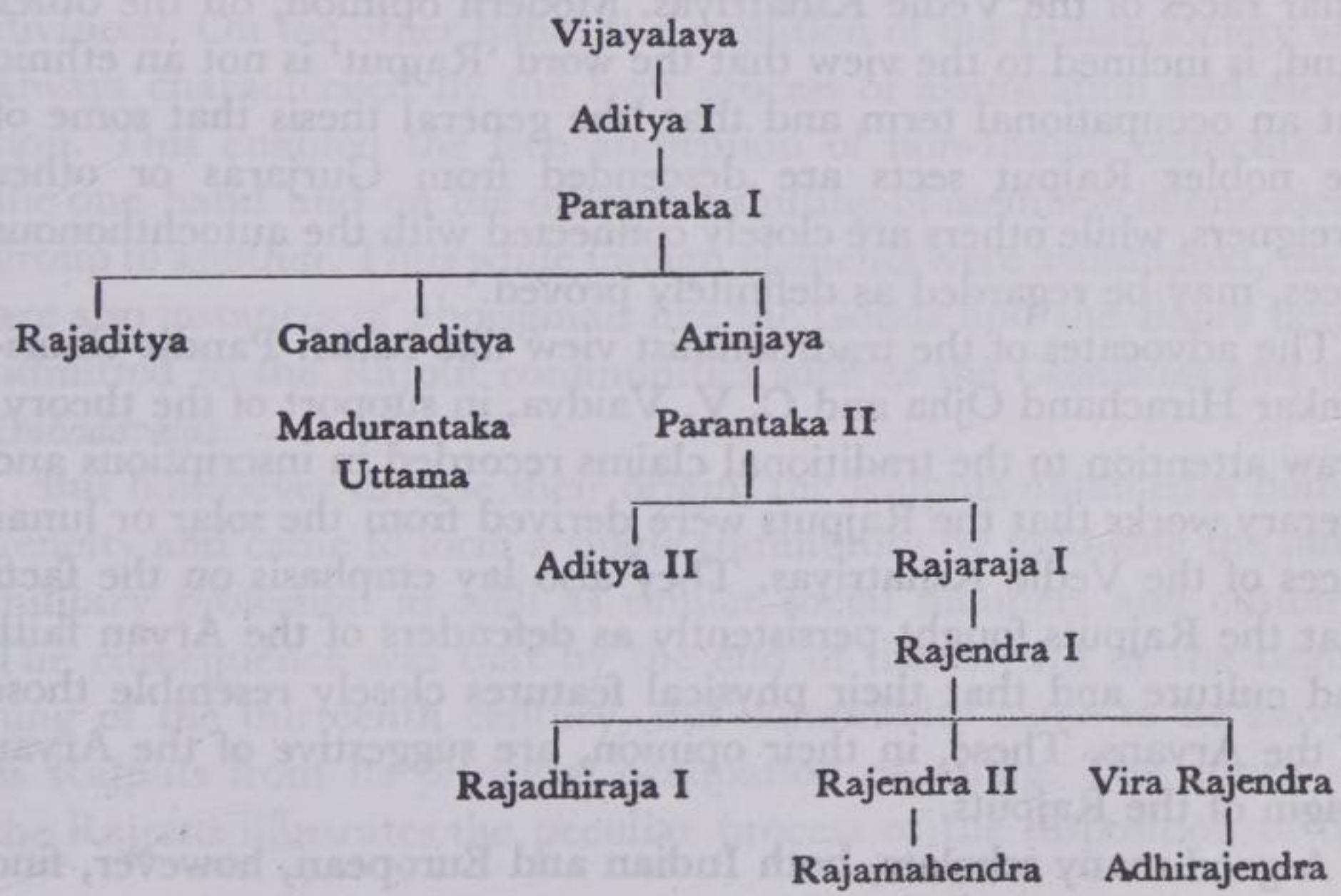


THE RASHTRAKUTAS OF MANYAKHETA



THE CHOLAS OF TANJORE



CHAPTER NINE

KINGDOMS IN THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH TILL THE ADVENT OF MUSLIM POWER

North Indian Kingdoms: The Rajput Period

THE decline and fall of the Pratiharas in the middle of the tenth century meant the end of the first Rajput empire; but it did not mean the end of Rajput ascendancy in India north of the Vindhyas. Out of the ruins of the Pratihara empire arose many independent kingdoms most of which were governed by Rajput dynasties. It has often been supposed that in the post-Pratihara period India lapsed into a state of confusion and anarchy. Such a view is hardly correct. The various powers, no doubt, became involved in struggles with one another. But only a mistaken view can regard these struggles 'as meaningless', as it has been supposed. In reality the struggle was but a bid for revival of imperial unity such as the Pratiharas had built up. The period from the dissolution of Pratihara empire till the advent of the Muslim power, so far as Northern India is concerned, may rightly be regarded as the age of the struggle for empire.

The Rajputs—Their Origin: Controversy persists even to this day as to the source from which the Rajputs were derived. The traditionalist view places reliance on the evidence of literary and epigraphic records and regards the Rajputs as descendants of the old solar or lunar races of the Vedic Kshatriyas. Modern opinion, on the other hand, is inclined to the view that the word 'Rajput' is not an ethnic but an occupational term and that 'the general thesis that some of the nobler Rajput sects are descended from Gurjaras or other foreigners, while others are closely connected with the autochthonous races, may be regarded as definitely proved.'

The advocates of the traditionalist view like M.M. Pandit Gaurisankar Hirachand Ojha and C. V. Vaidya, in support of the theory, draw attention to the traditional claims recorded in inscriptions and literary works that the Rajputs were derived from the solar or lunar races of the Vedic Kshatriyas. They also lay emphasis on the facts that the Rajputs fought persistently as defenders of the Aryan faith and culture and that their physical features closely resemble those of the Aryans. These, in their opinion, are suggestive of the Aryan origin of the Rajputs.

A good many scholars, both Indian and European, however, find

the arguments of the traditionalists unconvincing. Tradition, they point out, is not history and claims of Aryan origin as recorded in ancient inscriptions and literature were prompted by desire on the part of the Rajputs to pass as good Kshatriyas. The fact that they fought valiantly in defence of Aryan faith and culture does not necessarily prove their Aryan descent; on the other hand, it is more probable that they championed the cause of Aryan religion and culture with the zeal characteristic of new converts to a faith. Anthropometric measurements again, in their opinion, do not yield any conclusive results and are at best hypothetical. On the contrary, there are positive grounds for believing that the Rajputs were a mixed people. Some of them were no doubt descended from the Vedic Kshatriyas, but there is conclusive evidence that a good many of them were foreign immigrants into India. The tradition of *Agni-Kula* (fire-pit), according to which the Pratiharas, the Paramaras, the Chaulukyas and the Chahamanas were derived from the fire-pit, is itself suggestive that they were originally non-Indians who were absorbed within the Indian society through a process of purification symbolised by fire. There is, besides, the evidence of at least one inscription which shows that one of the four leading Rajput families, viz. the *Pratiharas*, was a branch of the Gurjara race, an admittedly foreign people, akin to the Huns. Furthermore, the study of Rajput cults and beliefs indicates the presence therein of several elements of distinctly non-Aryan character. It is also pointed out by modern scholars that the Indian society was not split into water-tight compartmental divisions. On the other hand, the evolution of the Indian society was always characterised by the twin process of assimilation and elevation. This enabled the free absorption of non-Indian elements on the one hand and on the other the shifting of members of one social group to another. Thus while foreign elements were assimilated, there are also instances of aboriginals like the Gonds and the Bhars being admitted to the Rajput communities such as the *Chandellas* and the *Gahadavalas*.

But howsoever diverse their origin, the Rajputs obtained a homogeneity and came to form a single community by following the same military profession as well as similar social manners and customs. The consequence was that by the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century, this community came to be known as Rajputs from its principal occupation of ruling. The advent of the Rajputs illustrates the peculiar process of the disposition of the

Indian society which prevails even now. The idea that we get of the early Indian society is that of one divided into four *Varnas*. In the present-day society, however, this four-fold division is non-existent. This change took place about the time when the Rajput community was coming into prominence. Thus, with their advent must be associated the present disposition of the Hindu society.

The Rajput Kingdoms—Their Bid for Empire: The first determined bid for restoration of imperial unity was made by the *Chandellas*. In traditional records they are represented as scions of the lunar race of the Kshatriyas; but it is more probable that they were, in origin, aboriginals who were upgraded and given a place in the new social group known as the Rajputs. Bundelkhand, which was the seat of their power, was at one time included within the imperial dominions of the Pratiharas. But like many other feudatories, the Chandellas took advantage of the decline of the Pratiharas which had set in in the generation after the death of Mahendrapala (*c.* 910 A.D.) and made a bid for independence.

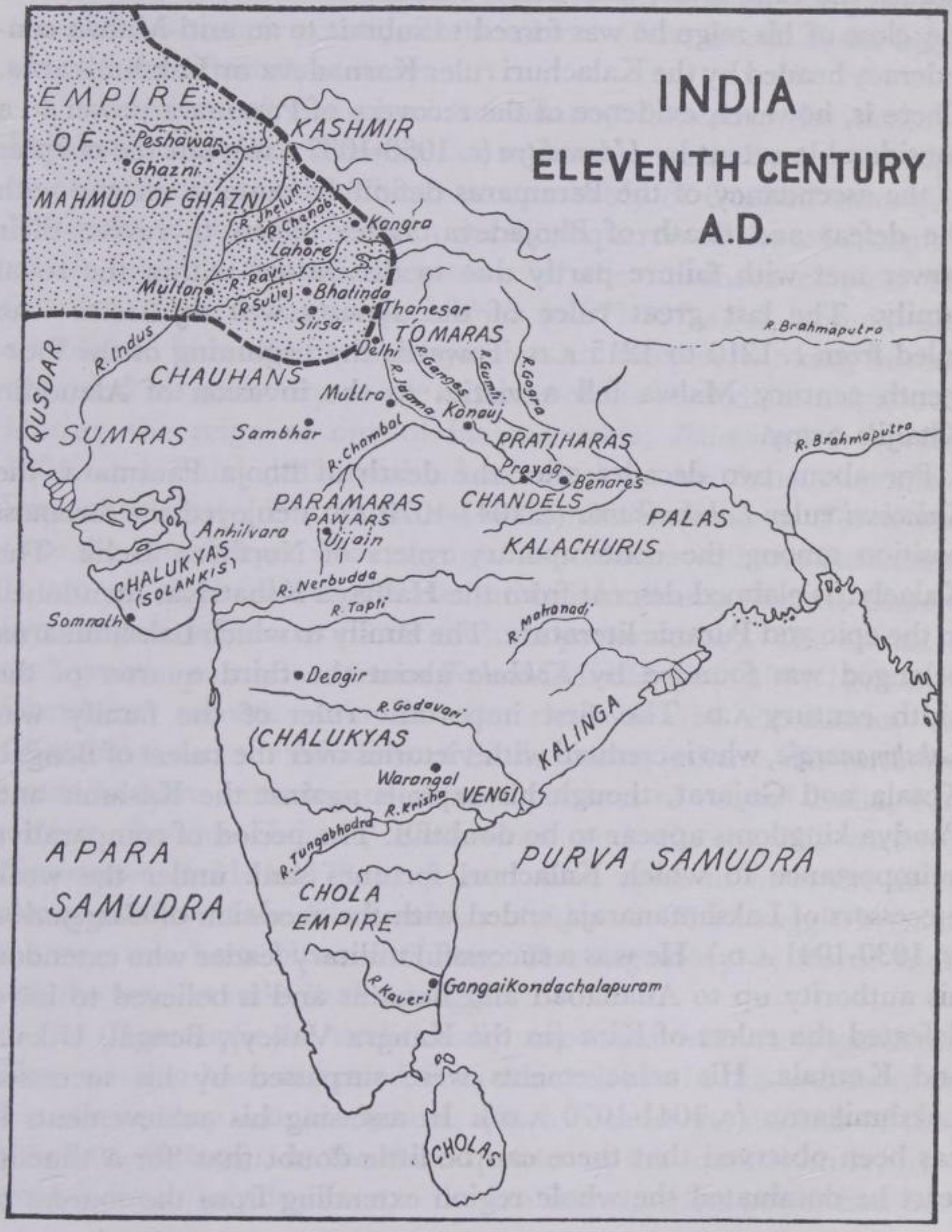
The founders of Chandella greatness were *Harsha* (*c.* 900-925 A.D.) and his son *Yasovarman* (*c.* 925-954 A.D.). While the former restored Mahipala I to the throne of Kanauj about 917 A.D., the latter was the king-maker and *de facto* power behind the throne during the period of the fast declining power of the Pratiharas under the successors of Mahipala I. The next ruler, *Dhanga* (*c.* 954-1008 A.D.), grew to be so powerful as to discard the nominal allegiance to the Pratiharas and assume the style and title of a full-fledged independent ruler. He is also credited with having waged successful war against his eastern and southern neighbours.

The most remarkable king of the dynasty was his grandson *Vidyadhara* (*c.* 1017-1029 A.D.). He proved himself to be a worthy antagonist of Sultan Mahmud, who led two expeditions against him without much success. He also challenged and defeated the Pratihara ruler Rajyapala for his cowardly submission to the Ghaznavid invader. He also made the Paramara king *Bhojadev* of Malwa and the Kalachuri king *Kokkala II* to submit to his paramount authority. Under him the authority of the Chandellas was so well grounded that it may be claimed with justice that 'the mantle of imperialism which had dropped out of the possession of the Pratihara Emperors seems to have fallen on those of the Chandellas.'

The Chandella paramountcy did not, however, survive the death of Vidyadhara. His two immediate successors *Vijayapala* and *Deva-*

varman were weak. Though the next ruler *Kirtivarman* (*c.* 1070-1098 A.D.) partly recovered the power of the Chandellas, it did not reach the height it had attained under Vidyadhara.

The centre of gravity next shifted to Malwa, where the *Paramaras* had laid the foundation of a powerful kingdom. Unlike the Chandellas, the Paramaras were probably foreign immigrants into India, though there is an alternative suggestion that they were derived from the stock of the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan. They exploited the situation arising out of protracted conflict between the Rashtrakutas and



the Pratiharas to their advantage and steadily consolidated their authority in Malwa.

The first independent ruler of the dynasty was *Siyaka II* (*c.* 949-971 A.D.). But the emergence of the Paramaras as a paramount power took place under *Bhoja Paramara* (*c.* 1010-1055 A.D.). He filled the vacuum caused by the decline in the fortunes of the Chandellas, following the death of Vidyadhara. He enlarged the limits of his kingdom at the expense of the neighbours and attained the position of a 'nripa-sarbabhauma'. Paramara sources record his victories against the Chalukyas, Kalachuris and the Chaulukyas. But towards the close of his reign he was forced to submit to an anti-Malwa confederacy headed by the Kalachuri ruler Karnadeva or Lakshmikarna. There is, however, evidence of the recovery of Paramara power to a considerable extent by *Udayaditya* (*c.* 1058-1087 A.D.), but the chapter of the ascendancy of the Paramaras definitely came to an end with the defeat and death of Bhojadeva. Later efforts to revive their power met with failure partly due to dissensions within the royal family. The last great ruler of the dynasty was *Arjunadeva* who ruled from *c.* 1210 to 1215 A.D. Towards the beginning of the fourteenth century Malwa fell a victim to the invasion of Alauddin Khalji's army.

For about two decades after the death of Bhoja Paramara, the *Kalachuri* ruler *Lakshmikarna* (*c.* 1041-1070 A.D.) enjoyed the foremost position among the contemporary rulers of Northern India. The Kalachuris claimed descent from the Haihaya Kshatriyas mentioned in the epic and Puranic literature. The family to which Lakshmikarna belonged was founded by *Kokkala* about the third quarter of the ninth century A.D. The first important ruler of the family was *Lakshmanaraja*, who is credited with victories over the rulers of Bengal, Kosala and Gujarat, though his exploits against the Kashmir and Pandya kingdoms appear to be doubtful. The period of comparative unimportance to which Kalachuri fortunes sank under the weak successors of Lakshmanaraja ended with the accession of *Gangeyadeva* (*c.* 1030-1041 A.D.). He was a successful military leader who extended his authority up to Allahabad and Banaras and is believed to have defeated the rulers of Kira (in the Kangra Valley), Bengal, Utkala and Kuntala. His achievements were surpassed by his successor Lakshmikarna (*c.* 1041-1070 A.D.). In assessing his achievements it has been observed that there can be little doubt that 'for a time at least he dominated the whole region extending from the sources of

the Banas and the Mahi rivers in the west to the estuaries of the Hoogly in the east, and from the Ganges-Jumna Valley in the north to the upper waters of the Mahanadi, Wainganga, Wardha and Tapti. Thus the mantle of imperialism which had fallen from the shoulders of the Gurjara-Pratiharas upon the Chandellas and the Paramaras was at last seized by the Kalachuris.' But Lakshmikarna Kalachuri, like Bhoja Paramara, was not destined to enjoy his primacy for long. A challenge against his ascendancy came from the Palas, the Chandellas and the Chaulukyas, and he was compelled to suffer reverses. His successors ruled over an area around Jabalpur, the nucleus of their power, till the advent of the Gonds in the beginning of the fifteenth century.

The decline of Kalachuri ascendancy following the death of Lakshmikarna marked the bid for supremacy made by the *Chaulukyas* or *Solankis* of Gujarat. They were probably of Gurjara extraction. Their rise to power dates from the third quarter of the tenth century which saw the final disintegration of the Pratihara empire. The founder of the dynasty was *Mulraja* (*c.* 971-997 A.D.), who not only established his authority in Gujarat as an independent king but also extended his authority at the expense of his immediate neighbours. During the reign of one of his successors, *Bhimadeva I* (*c.* 1022-1064 A.D.), Sultan Mahmud led an attack on the famous temple of Somanath situated at Prabhasa within his dominions. For a long time the Chaulukyas were engaged in hostilities with the Paramaras. It was not till the death of Kalachuri Lakshmikarna that the Chaulukyas began deliberate efforts towards paramountcy. The climax of their power was attained under *Jayasinha Siddharaja* (*c.* 1094-1143 A.D.). Chaulukya records claim his victories over the Paramaras, the Chandellas and the Muslims of Sind, among others. His authority seems to have extended over large portions of central India, Rajputana, besides Gujarat, Kathiawad and Cutch. His successor *Kumarapala* (*c.* 1144-1173 A.D.) was called upon to meet the determined enmity of the Chahamanas of Ajmere. The struggle between the two was both bitter and long. The hegemony in North India was the issue at stake in the struggle.

The *Chahamanas* are traditionally associated with the Agni-Kula. They seem to have migrated from Ahichchatra in the middle of the seventh century A.D. to Ajmere, which became the nucleus of their kingdom. *Sinharaja*, in the third quarter of the tenth century, freed himself from the allegiance to the Pratiharas, whose power had been

steadily on the decline, and assumed the style of an independent monarch. His successor *Vigraharaja II* (*c.* 973-997 A.D.) won distinction by his victories over the contemporary Chalukya king Mulraja and by extending his authority as far south as the Narmada. His successors were called upon to wage war with several neighbouring powers on the one hand and the Muslims of Sind and the Punjab on the other. Their bid for paramountcy dates from the accession of *Vigraharaja IV*, popularly known as Visaldeo (1153-1164 A.D.). He conquered Delhi, which belonged to the Tomaras, and acquired the territory between the Sutlej and the Jamuna then held by the Muslims. He also gave a new turn to the war with the Chalukyas of Gujarat which ultimately ended in the replacement of Chalukya ascendancy by that of the Chahamanas.

Prithviraja III (*c.* 1179-1192 A.D.), who had completed the work begun by Vigraharaja IV, was, however, confronted with a new enemy, viz. the *Gahadavalas* of U.P. The latter were probably an aboriginal people in origin, who were admitted within the fold of the neo-military aristocracy known as the Rajputs. In course of time they acquired considerable power and territories so as to make a bid for ascendancy. The foundation of the greatness of the family was laid by *Chandradeva* (*c.* 1090-1100 A.D.) who obtained the possession of the Ganga-Jamuna Valley with Kanauj as its chief city. Considerable additions to the power and prestige of the Gahadavalas were made by *Govindachandra* (*c.* 1114-1154 A.D.) who is usually regarded as the greatest ruler of the Gahadavala dynasty. The reign of his successor *Jayachchandra* (*c.* 1170-1193 A.D.) saw a bitter conflict between him and his Chahamana contemporary *Prithviraja III.* Traditions preserve many accounts of conflict between the two, and romantic stories have been woven around the contest. In reality, however, the conflict was but the outcome of a natural bid for supremacy by the two powers who equalled each other in ambition and resources. But when the struggle was on, and the issue as to which of the two powers would acquire the sovereignty of Northern India was yet to be decided, an old enemy, viz. the Muslims under Muhammad Ghori, who had already made steady progress in India, appeared on the scene, first, of Ajmere and then, of Kanauj. In the contest that followed Prithviraja won initial success in the first battle of *Tarain* (1191 A.D.) but in the second battle which was fought next year on the same plain he was defeated and killed. His death meant the passing away of the last great Rajput hero of early

mediaeval times. Next came the turn of Jayachchandra, who fell fighting while resisting the Ghori army on the battle-field of *Chandawar* (1193 A.D.). These successive victories paved the way for the replacement of Rajput ascendancy by that of the Ghoris in Northern India.

The Senas of Bengal

A non-Rajput power which survived the Muslim advent in Eastern India was that of the Senas.

The Senas who succeeded the Palas as the leading power in Eastern India claim in their records descent from the Karnatas or Brahma-Kshatriyas of Dakshinapatha. Relying on these records it has been generally supposed that the Senas originally belonged to the Kannada-speaking region of the south. How and when they came to Bengal is not exactly known; but the inclusion of the Karnatas in the list of officials under the Pala kings is suggestive of the fact that the founders of Sena power in Bengal were originally officials under the Palas and that in the days of the decline of the Palas their successors were successful in their bid for independence.

The first known member of the family was *Samantasena*. Late in life he settled in Radha as a local chief after having distinguished himself in his youth in battles in the south against the Cholas. His son *Hemantasena* took advantage of the confusion that followed the Kalachuri raids in Bengal led by Karnadeva, consolidated his position in Radha and even assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraja* as a token of his enhanced power.

His son and successor *Vijayasena* (*c.* 1095-1158 A.D.) made considerable addition to the power and prestige of the family by war and matrimonial alliances. He married a princess of the Sura family, allied himself with Anantavarman Chodaganga, king of Kalinga, and is credited with victories over the rulers of Kotatavi and Dvorapavardhana (in Kausambi), Mithila, and Varendri Gauda. He also claims to have waged successful wars against the Gahadavala king Govindachandra of Kanauj and directed raids against Kamarupa in the east and Orissa in the south. By way of emphasising his enhanced power thus obtained, mainly through war and partly on account of marriage and diplomatic alliances, Vijayasena assumed the high-sounding title of *Ariraja-Vrishabha-Sankara*.

Vijayasena was succeeded by his son *Ballalasena* (*c.* 1158-1179 A.D.). He enhanced the rising power of the Senas by conquering North Bengal and by the final overthrow of the remnants of Pala power.

The claim in traditional records of his campaigns in Magadha is doubtful since it lacks corroboration. But there can be little doubt that he not only maintained the ancestral dominions intact, but had even added to them.

His son and successor *Lakshmanasena* (*c.* 1179-1205 A.D.) was the last great representative of the Sena dynasty. The epigraphic records of the family speak of his victories in Gauda, Kamarupa, Kalinga and Kasi. His pillars of victory were planted in Puri, Allahabad and Banaras, probably as tokens of his success against the Gahadavalas of Kanauj. But Lakshmanasena was not able to retain his firm grasp over the entire kingdom till the end of his career. Towards the close of his reign the unity and the strength of the Sena kingdom were largely undermined as a result of rebellions from within and invasions from without. The leader of the external invasion was Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji, an adventurer and follower of Muhammad of Ghor. He occupied Magadha and made a sudden appearance before Nadia by marching across the unfrequented hills and forests of Jharkhand. Lakshmanasena, who was then staying at Nadia, was overwhelmed with the suddenness of the attack, left the city and fled to East Bengal. The conquest of Nadia by the Khilji adventurer was the first step in the Muslim conquest of Bengal.

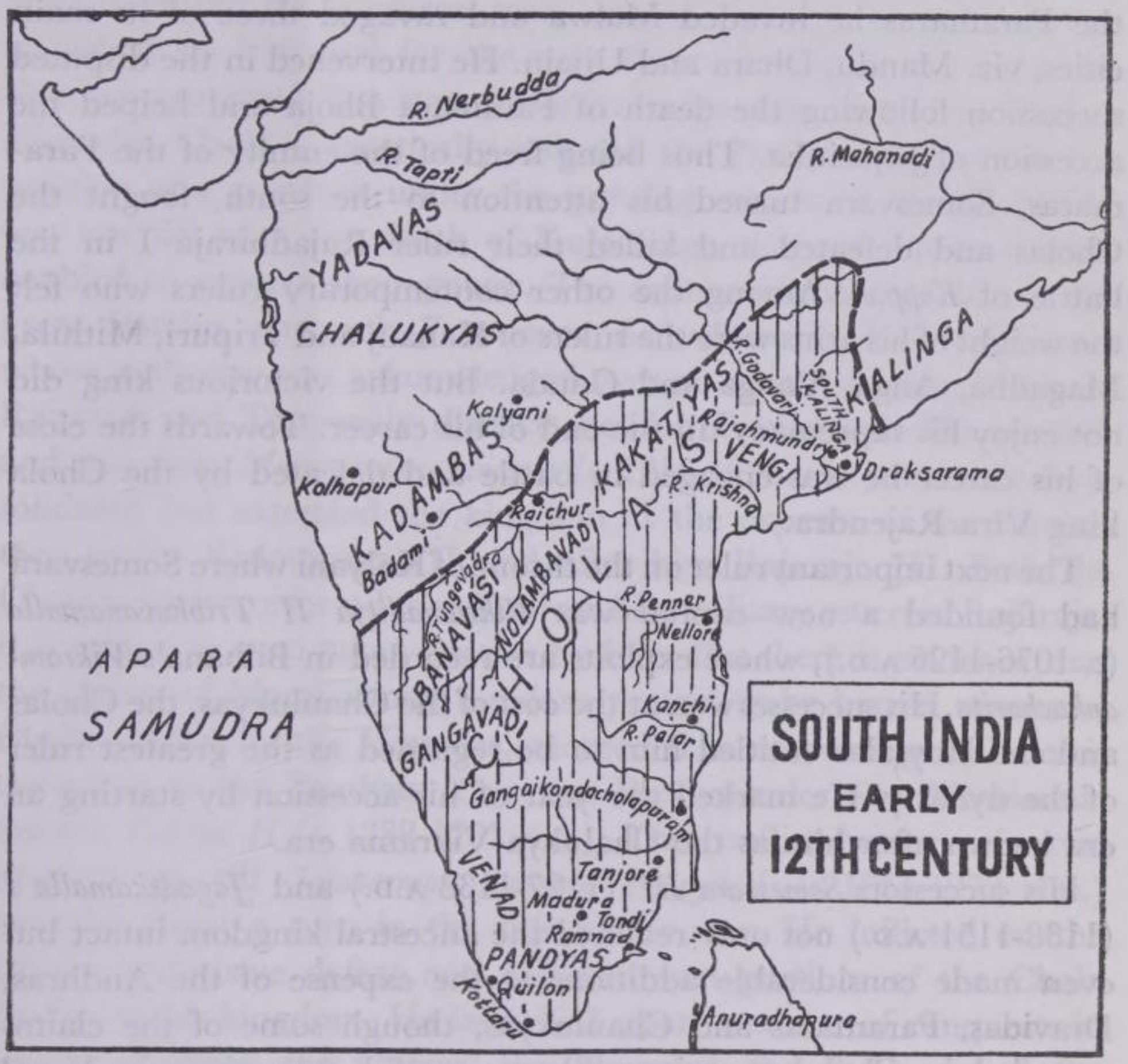
The loss of Nadia was a great blow to the power and pride of Lakshmanasena, who, however, continued to rule in East Bengal for the remaining years of his life. His two sons *Viswarupasena* and *Keshavasena* ruled as independent monarchs in Eastern and Southern Bengal, where Sena rule survived, according to Muslim records, till 1260 A.D.

The period of Sena rule, though brief, was vigorous for at least three generations. They recovered for Bengal the political unity and cohesion lost since the fall of the Palas and set it up as a citadel of Brahmanical and Sanskritic culture against the challenge of Buddhism propagated by the Palas on the one hand and of Islam championed by the followers of Muhammad Ghori on the other.

South Indian Kingdoms

The Western Chalukyas: The Chalukyas of Kalyani, known as the Western Chalukyas, were a collateral branch of the Eastern Chalukyas. The founder of the family, *Taila* or *Tailapa* (*c.* 973-997 A.D.), was originally a feudatory of the Rashtrakutas. He took advantage of the confusion which followed the defeat and death of Khottiga at the hands of the Paramaras to defy the authority of the weak Rashtra-

kuta king, Amoghavarsha IV, and proclaim his independence. He also enlarged his kingdom at the expense of the Kalachuris, the Gangas, the Chaulukyas and the Cholas. He is said to have ultimately defeated and killed Vakpati Munja, the Paramara king of Malwa, after having suffered reverses at his hands in six successive encounters.



Taila's son and successor *Satyasraya* (*c.* 997-1008 A.D.) was called upon to face the hostility of the Cholas between whom and the Western Chalukyas ensued a long and bitter conflict. The Paramaras were yet another enemy of the Western Chalukyas. We know from Paramara sources that Bhoja Paramara of Malwa avenged the defeat and death of his predecessor, Vakpati Munja, by putting to defeat Satyasraya's successor *Vikramaditya V* (*c.* 1008-1014 A.D.). But the next ruler *Jayasinha II Jagadekamalla* (*c.* 1015-1043 A.D.) revived the fortunes of the Chalukyas to a considerable extent and nullified the attempts of the Paramaras and their allies, the Chaulukyas and the

Kalachuris, to penetrate into the interior of the Chalukya dominions. He is also credited in Chalukya records with success in war with Rajendra Choladeva, for whom Chola records, however, claim success against the Chalukya monarch. The war with the Paramaras and the Cholas continued during the reign of the next monarch *Somesvara I Ahavamalla* (*c.* 1043-1068 A.D.). In course of his war with the Paramaras he invaded Malwa and ravaged three of its main cities, viz. Mandu, Dhara and Ujjain. He intervened in the disputed succession following the death of Paramara Bhoja and helped the accession of Jayasinha. Thus being freed of the enmity of the Paramaras, Somesvara turned his attention to the south, fought the Cholas and defeated and killed their ruler Rajadhiraja I in the battle of *Koppan*. Among the other contemporary rulers who felt the weight of his arms were the rulers of Kanauj and Tripuri, Mithila, Magadha, Anga, Vanga and Gauda. But the victorious king did not enjoy his supremacy till the end of his career. Towards the close of his career he was engaged in battle and defeated by the Chola king Vira Rajendra.

The next important ruler on the throne of Kalyani where Somesvara had founded a new capital was *Vikramaditya II Tribhuvanamalla* (*c.* 1076-1126 A.D.), whose exploits are recorded in Bilhana's *Vikramankacharita*. His successes won at the cost of the Chaulukyas, the Cholas and the Hoysalas entitled him to be regarded as the greatest ruler of the dynasty. He marked the year of his accession by starting an era known after him as the Chalukya-Vikrama era.

His successors *Somesvara III* (1127-1138 A.D.) and *Jagadekamalla I* (1138-1151 A.D.) not only retained the ancestral kingdom intact but even made considerable additions at the expense of the Andhras, Dravidas, Paramaras and Chaulukyas, though some of the claims recorded in Chalukya sources like successful campaigns in Nepal appear to be exaggerated.

The death of Jagadekamalla about 1151 A.D. was followed by a steady tendency to decline in the fortunes of the Western Chalukyas. Within six years of his death, the throne of Kalyani passed into the possession of a usurper—Vijjala or Vijjana, a minister of the Kalachuri prince. A few years later a scion of the Chalukya family, *Somesvara IV* (1184-1200 A.D.), no doubt recovered the ancestral throne but the rise of the Yadavas and the renewed hostilities of the Hoysalas led to the total eclipse of the Western Chalukya power by the middle of the thirteenth century.

The Pandyas: The role of the Pandyas in the ancient history of South India has been dealt with in an earlier chapter. In the beginning of the ninth century they were a power enjoying considerable territories and prestige. Their king, *Sri-Mara Sri Vallabha* (*c.* 815-862 A.D.) is credited with victories not only over the Gangas, the Pallavas and the Cholas but is also said to have vanquished the king of Ceylon. But his successors were unable to retain the position bequeathed by him and for the next three centuries and more the Pandyas remained in a state of virtual subjection under the Cholas. Rajendra Chola I practically reduced the Pandya kingdom to the position of a province under the growing empire of the Cholas. It was not till after the death of Kulottunga that the Pandyas were enabled to recover their power. The author of the revival was the great Pandya monarch *Jatavarman Kulasekhara* (*c.* 1190-1216 A.D.) whose authority was acknowledged over an area including Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevelly districts besides Travancore. His brother and successor *Maravarman Sundara* (*c.* 1216-1238 A.D.) not only consolidated but extended the kingdom at the expense of the Cholas, then under Kulottunga III and after him Rajaraja III. Both the Chola rulers were forced to suffer from him military reverses. Rajaraja, it is said, was even taken captive by him. But there is evidence that the glories of Maravarman Sundara proved to be barren, since the Cholas, aided by the Hoysalas, succeeded in recovering their territories lost to the Pandyas. The next Pandya ruler was *Maravarman Sundara Pandya II* (*c.* 1238-1251 A.D.). The conflict between the two lingered on till *Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I* (*c.* 1251-1272 A.D.) brought about a turn in the tide of the war. He inflicted on the Cholas a decisive defeat and annexed vast portions of the Chola empire to his kingdom. He launched upon a career of conquests in course of which the Cheras, the Hoysalas, the Pallavas and the Kakatiyas, among others, were forced to suffer reverses. He thus asserted his claim to be regarded as the greatest among the Pandya monarchs whose authority extended over the entire area from Nellore and Cuddapah in the north to Ceylon on the south, excluding Mysore.

The famous Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, who visited the Pandya kingdom towards the close of the thirteenth century, records many interesting details about the country and its people. He describes the kingdom as 'the best of all the Indies. . . the finest and the noblest in the world.'

Internal dissensions, however, tended to weaken the Pandya monarchy after the death of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya and within less than forty years the Pandya kingdom was overrun by the invading armies of Alauddin Khilji.

The Yadavas of Devagiri: The Yadavas who claimed descent from Yadu, mentioned in the epics, were originally feudatories under the Rashtrakutas and the Western Chalukyas. The decline of the latter power encouraged them to make a bid for independence.

The foundation of the independent kingdom of the Yadavas was laid by *Bhillama V* (*c.* 1185-1191 A.D.) who repudiated the authority of the Western Chalukya king Somesvara I and wrested from him considerable territories lying to the north of the Krishna (1187 A.D.). He set up the capital of the newly-founded kingdom at Devagiri (modern Daulatabad). Bhillama was, however, defeated and killed by the Hoysala king Vira Ballala I in the battle of Lakkundi.

The next king, *Jaitugi* or Jaitrapal I (*c.* 1191-1210 A.D.), extended the limits of his kingdom by defeating Rudradeva, lord of the Tri-Kalingas and by placing his nominee on the throne of Warangal. The most remarkable king of the dynasty was his son *Singhana* (*c.* 1210-1247 A.D.). In Pandya records he is said to have defeated several contemporary powers, viz. the Silaharas of Kolhapura, the Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra, the Baghelas of Gujarat, the Paramaras of Malwa and the Chedis of Central India. His kingdom, it has been claimed, 'extended from Khandesh up to the Shimogu and Anantapur districts and from the western coast (excluding Northern Konkan) up to the eastern parts of Hyderabad and Berar.'

The next ruler, his grandson *Krishna* (*c.* 1247-1260 A.D.) carried on the war with the rulers of Malwa, Gujarat and Konkan, begun earlier. His successor, *Mahadeva* (*c.* 1260-1271 A.D.), finally defeated the Silaharas and annexed Northern Konkan but within less than a quarter-century Mahadeva's successor, *Ramachandra* (*c.* 1271-1309 A.D.), was faced with an attack led by Alauddin Khilji, then governor of Karra (1294 A.D.) and compelled to sign a humiliating treaty. This was the beginning of Khilji aggression which culminated in the establishment of Muslim authority over the kingdom of the Yadavas in 1312 A.D.

The Kakatiyas of Warrangal: According to traditional accounts the Kakatiyas were descended from the solar race of the Kshatriyas, though in several inscriptions discovered in the Nellore district they are distinctly described as Sudras. They were originally feudatories

under the Western Chalukyas till they proclaimed independence in the first quarter of the twelfth century A.D.

The first notable ruler of the family was *Prolaraja* (*c.* 1117 A.D.) who distinguished himself in war with the Western Chalukyas in the days of their decline. The most well-known among the Kakatiya rulers was *Ganapati* (*c.* 1199-1261 A.D.) who is said to have defeated the rulers of Kalinga, Devagiri, Karnataka and Lata. He is also credited with victories over the Cholas. His successor was his daughter *Rudramba* (*c.* 1261-1291 A.D.) who is said to have assumed the masculine name of Rudradeva Maharaja. Marco Polo who visited the kingdom about 1293 A.D. speaks highly of the efficient administration set up by the Queen.

Her grandson *Prataparudradeva*, who followed her on the throne and attempted to enlarge the kingdom by adding to it the districts of Kurnool, Cuddapah and Nellore, was, however, compelled to submit to Alauddin Khilji before he could mature his plans of consolidation. From the close of the thirteenth century the power of the Kakatiyas was steadily on the decline till the kingdom was absorbed into the Delhi Sultanate in the days of Ghyasuddin Tughluk.

The Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra: The Hoysalas, like the Yadavas, claimed, in their traditional records, descent from Yadu. They are first mentioned as feudatories ruling over a small area in Mysore under the Cholas and the Western Chalukyas. They came into prominence under *Bittiga Vishnuvardhan* (*c.* 1110-1140 A.D.), who is said to have strengthened his position and prestige by acquiring territories at the expense of the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Kadambas. He is also given credit for his victories in Malabar and South Kanara. His victorious army is further believed to have advanced as far as the river Krishna. There is, in all probability, an element of exaggeration in these claims. But there can be little doubt that he placed the Hoysala kingdom on a position of eminence it had not enjoyed before, with its authority entrenched over an area coextensive with Mysore and adjacent lands. He transferred his capital from Velapura (modern Belur) to Dvarasamudra (Halebid).

Vishnuvardhan's grandson, *Vira Ballala I* (*c.* 1172-1215 A.D.), renounced the last trace of formal allegiance to the Western Chalukyas and assumed the title and style indicative of sovereignty. His military exploits include successful campaigns against the Yadavas and the Western Chalukyas. But in the next generation the Yadavas

turned the tide in their favour when their king Singhana defeated the Hoysala prince Vira Ballala II, also known as Narasinha II.

The successors of Vira Ballala II were preoccupied with incessant wars fought with the Cholas and the Pandyas. These constant wars weakened the kingdom as a whole, which in the days of Vira Ballala III fell an easy victim to Muslim aggression led by Alauddin Khalji's troops under Malik Kafur (1310 A.D.)

CHAPTER TEN

SOUTH INDIA IN RETROSPECT

IN TEXTBOOK HISTORIES the part of India lying south of the Vindhyas generally receives less attention than the land north of the great mountain divide. Years back Vincent Smith drew attention to the inadequate and even niggardly treatment of the South in history books. It was, he wrote, 'as if the South did not exist'. This neglect he attributed to two major factors: one, that the corpus of source-material relative to the Vindhyan region is thinner than what forms the mass of materials for the Northern region, and two, that the antiquity of Northern India can be pushed back to a period much earlier than that of the South. Since the time of Vincent Smith the position has substantially altered. With the discovery of new archaeological finds and the re-assessment of epigraphic and literary sources it has been possible not only to push back the antiquity of South India and its attainments in culture to a period much earlier than the writer of the *Oxford History of India* had suggested (600 A.D.), but also to enlarge the entire perspective of South Indian history and culture.

It is necessary, at this stage, to precisely determine the connotation of the term 'South India', which varies when viewed from different angles. Geographically, the dividing line between the South and the North is the great Vindhya ranges. Socially and culturally, the demarcation is indicated by the differences that separate the Dravidian southerners from the Aryan northerners. From the ethnological point of view the dividing line lies further south, between the Aryan-dominated North and the Dravidian-settled region in the far South, comprising the four states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. The Deccan, in this context, belongs to a region which may be included in North India in one sense and in South India in a different sense. From the larger, historical perspective the geographical division is more important than ethnological, linguistic or cultural divisions.

The antiquity of South India, dating back to at least 3000 B.C., is suggested by the discovery, in the terraces of the river valleys of the Godavari and Narmada, of fossil remains of fauna and primitive stone tools of the Palaeolithic Age, similar to those unearthed in the Sivalik ranges in the north. Microliths discovered in Tinneveli and Tuticorin regions are cited as instances of later Stone Age tools in

South India. Similar to the finds discovered in various areas of North-West and North India, such as Peshawa, Karachi and Sera Kala in Bihar, vast and varied quantities of remains of the Neolithic Age, such as axes, chisels, pottery, etc., have been unearthed from several areas in the South including Bellary, Mysore and Andhra. Traces of relics of the Chalcolithic Age discovered at Lothal and Rangpur (in Gujarat) attest to the contemporaneity of the Chalcolithic Age in the South with that of the North. Iron was in use in the South (Brahmagiri) at least from the ninth century B.C. It is thus evident that the South can boast of an antiquity as old as that of the North and that the South passed through the same stages of evolution that characterised man's progress towards civilised life all over the ancient world.

More important than antiquity is perhaps the contribution of South India to the making of India and its culture. In Chapter 2, while discussing the various racial elements which constituted the early peoples of India, special mention has been made of the Dravidians, a branch of the Mediterranean race, and of their probable role in the making of the Indus Valley civilisation.

It is necessary to remember that in prehistoric times peninsular India developed its culture and moulded its history in its own way, unaffected by the North, which was later known as the *Aryavarta*. Evidence points to the fact that the Dravidians who largely settled in these regions had made a remarkable progress in civilisation even in the prehistoric period and were already acquainted with the techniques of mining and metallurgy. This is not to suppose that peninsular India remained, culturally speaking, in a state of isolation for long. With the spread of Aryan migration beyond the Vindhyas there ensued a process of adjustment and the stream of India's culture, as a whole, gathered momentum as a result of the amalgamation of the main constituents, Aryan and Dravidian. A close look into the religion, culture, language, literature, society, economy, politics and administration of those times reveals that though the South retained its individualism, in many respects its society and culture were largely modified by its contact with the North, involving a process of constant give and take. Thus, when the Aryan-dominated religion spread to the South it lost much of its pristine colour and assimilated large elements of Dravidian concepts, cults and practices. Many local cults and forms of worship, though at first superseded by the Aryan religion, were not extirpated, and survived through incorporation into Hinduism. To quote Professor K. A. Nilakantha Sastri, 'in the sphere of

religion South India began by being mainly indebted to the people of the North, but in course of centuries it more than amply repaid the debt and made equal contributions to the theory and practices of religion and to philosophic thought in various aspects.'

In medieval times the contribution of the South in the revival of Hinduism was deep and widespread, due, in the main, to the initiative and leadership of Sankaracharya. Later, partly because of the iconoclastic activities of the Muslim invaders, there took place an influx of Brahmans into the South under whose auspices Saivism and Tantric forms of worship became popular. Still later, a large number of medieval saints and philosophers of South India—Ramanuja, Madhva, Jnaneswara, Vallabhacharya to name only the foremost ones—chose to spend long years in North India and did much to promote religious fervour in general and the Bhakti cult in particular. This developed in the South features peculiar to it, resulting in the formation of Nirguna and Saguna schools of thought. There are also instances of Northern Indian religious teachers, specially of Saivisim, establishing themselves in different parts of peninsular India. Prominent among them were the founders of the Kalamukha, Pasupatha and other Saivite sects, both in the Deccan and in the far South.

In the realm of language and literature, too, the South exerted itself not only to enliven Sanskrit studies but also to promote its cultivation in the North; even today many of the centres of Sanskritic culture in North India are dominated by Brahmans of South Indian origin. Thus the traffic was not wholly one-way. Though not profound, Kannada literature made its influence felt on the Sanskrit language and literature. To cite examples, several *varnavrittas* and metres of Kannada origin gained recognition in Sanskrit. Experts have also discovered traces of Indo-Aryan elements in the vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax of Dravidian languages. However, it is far more important to appreciate the readiness with which Sanskrit and Pali—through the epics, the Gita, mythology, etc.—were allowed to enter the virgin soil of Dravidian literature and generate their counterparts in South India.

In matters of society and economy the North and the South reacted on and profoundly moulded each other's laws and customs. While *varnadharma*, as practised in the North, largely modified the religious and social institutions of the South, institutions such as Smriti regulations underwent changes in the South and permitted the first three castes to adopt, under adverse circumstances, occupations

of sections lower in rank. The Aryan contact was also responsible for making marriage ceremonies in the South more elaborate than they were in earlier days. The *Silappadikaram* contains a graphic account of ritualistic marriages. Even when Aryan rituals were adopted, making them more elaborate than before, some peculiar customs, such as the wearing of the sacred thread (*thati*) by the bride, a peculiarly non-Aryan Tamil custom, survived.

Again, attempts at evolving political cohesion through the agency of large kingdoms or empires were not the monopoly of the Northern powers; the South too played a decisive role in similar directions. Successive dynasties in peninsular India, from the Satavahanas to the Cholas, are known to have made a bid for a unified empire comprising both South and North India. A true perspective of Indian history can be obtained not only by enquiring into the nature and extent of the Aryanisation of the South but also, by means of a minute and critical study, of the process of Dravidisation of the North.

In the Middle Ages, following the Muslim advent into North India, the Deccan and the far South succeeded for many years in retaining their integrity and independence. Later, when Muslim rule expanded to trans-Vindhyan India, the penetration was not deep enough. As a result, the South became increasingly identified with the pattern of India's traditional life and society. In modern times the contact and adjustment between the North and the South, intensified by several factors such as improved communications, contact with the West, spread of Western education, growth of national consciousness, have become closer than ever before so that distinctions between the two geographically viable regions tend to blur, emphasising the historical fact of the oneness and indivisibility of the Indian nation and illustrating the triumph of history over geography.

In Chapters 6 and 9 the main currents of the political history of South India have been described. Chapters 11, 12 and 13 afford glimpses into the social history and cultural attainments of the South, with particular reference to architecture, sculpture and literature. What needs to be considered here is an appraisal of the role played by the South in promoting cultural contacts between India and other parts of the world in ancient times and the Middle Ages.

So far as evidence goes, the Dravidians, who had the largest share in the making of South India, were not settlers from outside. They were autochthons, but from days of remote antiquity they had wide contacts with the contemporary world of Mesopotamia, Egypt and

Palestine. 'Rice, peacocks, sandalwood, every unknown article which we find imported by sea into Babylon before the fifth century B.C.,' it has been observed, 'brought with it a Dravidian; not a Sanskrit designation.' There is also evidence to support the view that regular maritime intercourse existed between South India and the Middle Eastern regions, like the ports on the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, at least a thousand years before the birth of Christ. It has also been contended, on good grounds, that commercial relations between the Deccan and peninsular India, on the one hand, and the islands of the Pacific, on the other, date back to several centuries before the Christian era. As Dr. Nilakantha Sastri observes, evidence also points to the import of typical Indian products into China as far back as the seventh century B.C., while a number of Iron Age finds in the Philippines, closely resembling similar objects in South India, belong to the first millennium B.C. Similarly, trade is known to have existed between South India and the Roman Empire as early as the first century A.D.—a fact attested to by the discovery of a large collection of Roman coins in Arikamedu on the east coast. In still later days, which saw the rise of the Pallavas and the Chalukyas, regular contact was maintained with Malaya and Indonesia. The Imperial Cholas, who followed them, were destined to outdo their predecessors as a naval and maritime power, holding sway over distant and extensive regions in South Asia. Alastair Lamb has drawn our attention to inscriptions which 'show that there was very close contact between many South-East Asian regions and the Tamil Kingdoms, particularly during the period of the Chola dynasty,' and illustrates his point by referring to the existence of Tamil trading settlements in Western Sumatra and at Takuapa on the Kra Isthmus.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SOCIETY AND POLITY

Caste: CASTE is the most peculiar and characteristic feature of the Indian society. The reader should, however, be cautioned at the outset against the commonplace definition of caste. 'A caste,' it has been observed in the *Oxford History of India* (Third Revised Edition), 'may be defined as a group of families united by peculiar rules for the observance of ceremonial purity, especially in the matters of diet and marriage.' Such a definition is only applicable to a given period of time, but does not hold good in regard to the social history as a whole. It has been generally supposed that caste originated from the distinction between the white-skinned Aryans and the dark-skinned non-Aryans. But it would be hardly correct to use *Varnas* and *Jatis* as synonymous terms even if the latter originated from the former. In the context of the practical shape which caste assumed in course of centuries of its evolution it would perhaps be more reasonable to ascribe it to 'the natural response of the many small and primitive peoples who were forced to come to terms with a more complex economic and social system.'

Whatever its origin, the institution of the four castes or *Chatur-varnas* gradually became an increasingly complicated pattern. This was inevitable due to absorption of new elements in a rapidly growing society on the one hand and the transition from pastoral raider to food-producing economy in the productive relations. Thus while the predominance of the *Brahmans* and the *Kshatriyas* as superior castes tended to increase, the *Vaishyas* were exposed to greater exploitation and the number of the *Sudras* went on increasing steadily. But it is important to remember that for many years caste did not mean a rigid system based on water-tight compartmental divisions. There are passages in the old Vedic texts which show that the rules regarding restrictions of diet and marriage were yet to be framed and that it was possible for the members of the same family to adopt different arts, crafts and trades. It was possible for a person belonging by right of birth to a particular caste-group to become admitted to another caste-order by virtue of the profession he chose to adopt. It has thus been observed that 'there is enough evidence to show that the caste was not solely determined by the accident of birth, and the professions normally laid down for the different castes were

never scrupulously followed in practice.' In general, however, the old tendency towards the crystallisation of the priestly class as a superior group persisted and the position of the Sudras, in particular, tended to deteriorate.

A reaction set in the age of the Buddha. Neither the Buddhist nor the Jain literature admits the supremacy of the Brahmans. They invariably give preference to the Kshatriyas. But even then there had been no rigid restriction in practice against inter-marriage and inter-dining among the different caste-denominations.

In course of the succeeding ages, with the opening up of new opportunities and occupations, new caste-divisions arose. The *Kayasthas* may be cited as an example to illustrate the point. By occupation they were keepers of records; from the Mauryan times they began to form themselves into a new caste. Megasthenes was certainly mistaken when he spoke about the seven castes into which the Indian people were supposed to have been divided. It has been observed that the Greek ambassador mistook castes for occupations. But there can be little doubt that the new occupational units which had come into being tended to form themselves into distinct social units. Mixed castes, too, had become a regular feature of the social life so that castes not included in the original four-fold divisions found a place in the pattern of the Indian society. The process received an impetus from the influx and fusion of non-Indian elements into the Indian population. The Indian society reacted to this 'foreign' challenge by attempting a large-scale assimilation of non-Indian elements. This resulted in a redisposition of the Indian society permitting the emergence of the neo-military aristocracy known as the *Rajputs* who gradually replaced the older community of the Kshatriyas. The evolution of the Indian social order was increasingly characterised by the twin processes of assimilation and elevation. While the former permitted the absorption of non-Indian elements, the latter paved the way for the admittance of the so-called lower-grade or aboriginal people to a higher level in the social heirarchy.

The process went on unchecked till the advent of Islam with its mature civilisation and proclaimed mission in the service of a faith of a markedly contrasting character. To meet the new challenge Indian society made its laws more stringent than ever and attempted to preserve its existence through a process of rigidification. It was not till three hundred years had elapsed since the foundation of the

Delhi Sultanate that conscious efforts were directed to liberalise the caste rules and reorganise society on the basis of understanding and tolerance. Caste nevertheless survived and its denominations, specially sub-castes, went on increasing. It became an inseparable part of India's social pattern. It lingers on even today though in a much restricted manner. The *Harijans* of today are but the necessary evils of the caste of yesterday.

Social Life: Family was the unit round which the ancient Indian society moved. Generally, the family was patriarchal, the father being at its head and the administrator of the estate held jointly by the members consituting the family. A strong sense of solidarity held together the family as one indissoluble unit. The authority of the *pater familias* was considerable, though not absolute, for he was bound to observe shastric injunctions and conventions.

Society in the Vedic and the immediately following ages conformed, at least in theory, to the concept of the four *Ashramas*, viz. *Brahmacharya*, *Garhasthya*, *Banaprastha* and *Sannyas*. 'It is possible,' as has been suggested, that 'the system of the Ashramas was evolved partly as a counter-blast to the unorthodox sects such as Buddhism and Jainism, which encouraged young men to take up asceticism and bypass family life altogether, a practice which did not receive the approval of the orthodox, though in later times provision was made for it.'

Leaving behind the prehistoric Vedic and later Vedic ages whose social life and institutions have been dealt with in earlier chapters, as we step into the Mauryan times Megasthenes provides us with glimpses into the social life of contemporary India. Understandably enough, the Indian social order with its peculiar caste distinctions eluded the total comprehension of the foreign observer. For instance, he confused caste with occupation. But the general outlines recorded by him are clear enough. He testifies to the frugal and honest habits of the Indians as he writes: 'The Indians live frugally, especially when in camp. . . . Theft is a thing of very rare occurrence. . . . They never drink wine except at sacrifices.' The simplicity of their laws and contracts is proved by the fact that they seldom went to law. As Megasthenes states: 'They have no suits about pledges and deposits, nor do they require either scales or witness but make their deposits and confide in each other. Their houses and property they generally leave unguarded.' According to the Greek writer, the Indians were polygamous. He refers to purchase of brides for a

yoke of oxen; presumably the reference here is to the *Arsha* form of marriage prescribed by Manu in terms of which the bride's father was entitled to receive a pair of oxen or cows. In the opinion of the ambassador-historian slavery did not exist in India. This is incompatible with the evidence derived from Indian sources which proves the existence of various categories of slaves from early times. Perhaps Megasthenes was led to his conclusion by the fact that slavery as practised in ancient Greece was non-existent in India of his days. In the extracts from Megasthenes it is mentioned at one place that the 'Indians do not rear any monuments over their dead, for they regard that the virtues of the dead were by themselves sufficient monuments.' This is not, however, the whole truth, for Megasthenes himself says elsewhere that small monuments were erected over the dead.

Glimpses into the social life of India under the early Guptas are afforded by indigenous sources as well as by the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien. The pilgrim who visited (399-414 A.D.) India during the reign of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya observed that the people were charitably disposed and the rich and the prosperous among them competed with one another in practising the virtues of benevolence and righteousness. A large number of hospitals and charitable institutions were but public endowments. Testifying to the simple ways of living the pilgrim observes: 'The people are numerous and happy; they have not to register their households or attend to any magistrates or their rulers.' Generally speaking, they were vegetarian. 'There were', he writes, 'no shambles or wine-shops in their market-places.' The caste had become more rigid and social outcastes were designated as *Chandalas*.

The opulence of a section of the people is also attested by Hiuen Tsang who visited India a little over two centuries after Fa-Hien. Referring to the royal city of Kanuaj and its inhabitants he says: 'The people wore a refined appearance and the rich were dressed in glossy silk attire....They are pre-eminently explicit and correct in speech, their expressions being harmonious and elegant, like those of the Devas, and their intonation clear and distinct, serving as a rule and pattern for others.'

In spite of the continuity in the social life and manners across many centuries, signs of change in the position of women were clearly in evidence. The position that the womenfolk enjoyed in the early Vedic times was not retained by them in the later ages.

Manu assigns to them a position of dependence, if not of subordination. The *Arthasashtra* attests to considerable restraints placed on their movements. In the Deccan their movements were comparatively free and their rights more clearly defined. Several instances are known of royal ladies in South India excelling themselves in music and fine arts. Notwithstanding the restriction of freedom and opportunities it must not be supposed that the womenfolk were degraded. The ancient Sashtras invariably prescribe for them honourable and respectful treatment. Instances of women of the upper classes extending their sphere of activities beyond the domestic circle are provided by the Queen consorts and Queens regnant in Kashmir, Rajasthan, Orissa and Andhra. In general, a widow was not premitted to remarry, though some minor Sashtras sanction their remarriage under certain specific conditions. Classical writers testify to the practice of self-immolation of widows. But it does not appear to have been widely practised. Mediaeval writers condemned it. The impact of the Central Asian exodus into India probably gave the custom a wider sanction so that in the days before and after the advent of the British, it became fairly prevalent in several parts of India.

Education: Education was provided for in the Ashrama-dominated life of the ancient Indian people. According to the precepts laid down in the sacred texts the *Brahmachari* was required to receive training under the direct supervision of the *Guru* at the latter's residence. The Vedas formed the main subject of study in the beginning. Later on, the elaboration of the principal Vedas was effected through accessory texts like the *Vedangas* and the *Smritis*. To these were subsequently added the texts representing the views of the unorthodox sects. With the elaboration of religious and semi-religious systems, the scope of education widened and it was no longer confined either to the Brahmacharis or the home of the Gurus. Several cities like Taksasila, Banaras in North India and Kanchi in the Deccan gained reputation as centres of advanced learning. The monasteries and universities gradually came into prominence. Vikramsila, Somapuri, Oddantapuri, and above all, Nalanda developed as centres of higher education to which were attracted learners not only from all parts of India but even from beyond the country. Jaina monasteries similarly served as the centres of advanced learning in several parts of Western and Southern India. Secular education of a very high order was imparted in the well-known

university centres of Banaras, Taksasila, Ujjain, Dhara, Valabhi, Kanchi and Bahur (near Pondicherry). These centres continued to be actively engaged in the pursuit and propagation of knowledge till they fell victims to the Muslim attacks.

Language: Sanskrit remained for many centuries the literary vehicle in India, though it underwent changes since the days when the Vedas were composed and recited. Apart from Sanskrit there were Prakrit variants, originally derived from Sanskrit. In course of time these Prakrit variants, which started as spoken dialects, developed as full-fledged literary vehicles. The first step towards this transformation was taken when the Jain and Buddhist teachers chose Prakrit variants as the media for the propagation of their religious teachings. The great imperial missionary Asoka adopted Pali as the vehicle for the moral precepts propagated in his edicts. Other variants of Prakrit were the Magadhi, Sauraseni, Ardha-Magadhi and Apabhramsa. In South India, Dravidian, which is supposed to have been affiliated to the Finno-Ugrian group, remained for long the only language. In course of time the Dravidian language developed four principal dialectic and literary forms, viz. *Tamil* (Cape Comorin to Madras), *Kannada* (Mysore and Andhra), *Telugu* (Madras to Orissa) and *Malayalam* (Malabar). At a later date, probably from the first century A.D., the advent of Aryan culture and Sanskrit language began to make its influence felt in regions south of the Vindhyas.

The advent of the Prakrit and Dravidian variants and of the vernaculars at a later age, did not, however, mean the loss of primacy of Sanskrit which continued to be the medium of official records and literary expression on a large scale. The stabilisation of the Sanskrit language was largely facilitated by the composition of the great grammatical work of *Panini*.

Literature: The Vedic-literature, specially the hymns, are specimens of excellent artistic literary composition, enlivened by a deep appreciation of nature and its varied phenomena. A number of them reveal a strikingly secular attitude. The prose literature employed in the composition of the later Vedic works was, however, less artistic than its counterpart in verses. The *Upanishads*, no doubt, were mature literary compositions, but on the whole their value was more religious and philosophical than literary. The epics were the first secular literature of India. No doubt there are some passages in the *Mahabharata*, like the *Santi-Parva*, which cannot claim much literary

merit, but, on the whole, both the epics are literary productions of a very high order.

The classical Sanskrit poetry found its first exponent in *Asvaghosha* (first century A.D.), the author of *Buddha-Charita*. It reached its perfection in the age of the Guptas which is usually regarded as the age of the Indian Renaissance. The term is, however, misleading. Renaissance presupposes a process of revival following a period of abeyance or decadence. While the term is applicable to the literary and artistic revival in Europe in the late fifteenth century, it does not correctly represent the character of the artistic and literary outbursts witnessed in India in the Gupta age. In fact it did not witness a revival, since Sanskrit culture was not in a state of abeyance at any period prior to the advent of the Guptas. Even while Northern India was dominated by the foreign Kushans, the flow of Sanskritic culture remained continuous. The court of Kaniska, for instance, was adorned by outstanding scholars like *Parsva*, *Vasumitra*, *Charaka*, *Nagarjuna*, and above all, *Asvaghosha*, who composed their monumental works on different subjects in Sanskrit. It will be, therefore, more correct to describe the Gupta age as the age of efflorescence rather than of Renaissance.

The greatest and the most well-known literary figure of the Gupta age was *Kalidasa* who, in all probability, was a contemporary of *Chandragupta II Vikramaditya* or his immediate successor. The epics *Raghuvamsam* and *Kumara-Sambhavam*, the lyric *Meghadutam* and the dramas entitled *Abhijnana-Sakuntalam* and *Malavikagnimitram* are considered literary masterpieces of an almost unsurpassable excellence. Among other notable literary figures and scholars of the Gupta age were *Visakhadatta*, the author of *Mudrarakshasha*, *Sudraka*, author of *Mrichchakatikam*, *Amarasinha*, the noted lexicographer, *Varahamihira* and *Aryabhatta*, the great astronomers, and the Buddhist writers *Vasubandhu* and *Dignaga*. Many other poets after Kalidasa like *Kumaradasa*, *Bharavi*, *Bhatti* and *Magha* composed Mahakavyas. None of them could of course rival the excellence of Kalidasa though they undoubtedly enriched Sanskrit language and literature to a considerable extent.

The tradition of the Gupta imperial patronage to literature found in the succeeding ages a champion in Harshavardhana of Kanauj. He was not only the patron of *Banabhatta*, the famous author of *Harsha-charita* and *Kadambari* (a political novel), but was himself the

reputed author of the well-known dramas, the *Priyadarshika*, the *Nagananda* and the *Ratnavali*.

The period of the Rajputs too had to its credit important literary productions, giving the lie to the common belief that the post-Harsha phase of Indian literature was one of decadence. The Rajput kings were not merely great warriors, they were also liberal patrons of literature. Some of them like Paramara Vakpati-Munja and Bhoja-deva, Naravarman and Arjunavarman distinguished themselves by their literary achievements. The Chaulukya kings were also great patrons of literature. Well-known Jaina scholars like *Hemachandra*, *Abhayatilaka*, *Merutunga*, *Somaprabhacharya*, *Someswara*, *Jinamandana* and *Jinaprabha* who enjoyed the patronage of successive Chaulukya rulers enriched contemporary literature with their prolific compositions on a variety of subjects. While important works like *Prithviraja-Vijaya-Mahakavya*, *Hammira-Mahakavya* and the vernacular epic known as *Prithviraja-Raso* were composed under the auspices of the Chahamana rulers of Ajmere, the Gahadavala kings extended their patronage to *Naya-chandra Suri*, the author of *Rambha-Manjari*, and *Vidyapati*, who wrote the poetical work entitled *Purusha-Pariksha*.

India's literary efforts were not confined to only narrative poems, dramas, biographies and romances. Remarkable progress was also attained in the realm of fables and stories. The *Jatakas*, the *Panchatantra*, *Vetala-Pancha-Vimsati*, *Suka-Saptati* are examples of the great heights reached by India's literary genius in this branch of literature.

South India, too, like the rest of India made considerable progress in the pursuit of literature, both Sanskrit and vernacular. Sanskrit flourished in the pre-Christian era in the kingdoms of Chera, Pandya and Chola. 'The South of India', it has been said, 'not only received and mastered the Sanskrit language, but also enriched it, with vocabulary and thought.' The literature belonging to the period of the Satavahanas, the Chalukyas, the Pallavas, the Rashtrakutas, the Cholas, the Hoysalas and the Kakatiyas were of a mature order and were by no means inferior to the literary development in any other part of the country in the contemporary ages. No less remarkable was the progress attained in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada languages. The two earliest literary works in Tamil, *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekhalai*, reveal the cultural affinity between the north and the south. The South Indian languages were also enriched by adaptation of the great epics in comparatively early days. The Alwars and the Nayanars provided valuable materials for

devotional literature, noted alike for its style and thought. Tiruvalluvar's *Kural*, which 'provides a compendium of values to help a balanced life and an organised society', has been described as 'a gem of which any nation can be proud.'

Polity: The Vedas and the Buddhist texts offer us glimpses into the political life and thought of ancient India; but the science of statecraft, as a branch of secular literature, had to wait till the composition of the *Arthasashtra*, generally attributed to Kautilya and the *Santi-Parva* of the Mahabharata. In the following ages other treatises were added, like Kamandaka's *Nitisara*, *Nitivakyamrita* by Somadeva Suri and *Nitisara* supposed to have been composed by Sukra. While they deal with the theories of state-craft, a glimpse into the actual working of the system is afforded by a variety of sources—indigenous literature, inscriptions and foreign writings.

The picture of the state in the days up to the Buddhist age is only fragmentary. As we reach the Mauryan times the position improves and it is possible to reconstruct the administrative pattern of the country in more or less full details.

Kingship

Central Government: Kingship in the Mauryan age did not claim mystical or divine origin; Asoka, for instance, lived up to the ideal of paternal kingship and regarded his subjects as his own children. In one edict he says that whatever efforts he was making were the outcome of his determination to discharge his debt to those upon whom he was called upon to rule. The *Arthasashtra* also lays down the maxim: 'Whatever pleases himself the king shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good.'

The king enjoyed extensive powers as head of the state, as commander-in-chief of the troops and as the head of the judiciary. Kautilya specifically refers to the manifold duties that the king was required under the law to attend to. Megasthenes also conveys the same impression about the almost constant attention demanded of the king when he writes: 'The king remains there all day thus occupied, not suffering himself to be interrupted even when the time arrives for attending to his person.'

However extensive the king's authority might have been, it was not arbitrary. Kautilya enjoins on the king the need of seeking the advice and assistance of his counsellors. He was also expected to conform to Shashtric injunctions and usages of the country. There is

also evidence of the existence of an elaborate bureaucracy headed by the *Mantrins* and the *Amatyas*. A council of ministers or *Amatya-Parishad* is also known to have existed. They were required to render advice to the king in times of emergency. Below the Mantrins, Amatyas or Sachivas stood the *Adhyakshas* or officers in charge of different departments such as treasury, mint, tolls, shipping, etc.

Megasthenes' account of Chandragupta's administration closely resembles that of Kautilya. While the Mantrins and Sachivas corresponded with the 'councillors and assessors', the Adhyakshas were identical with the magistrates referred to in Megasthenes' *Indica*.

The judiciary too was an elaborate and well-planned machinery staffed with different grades of officers, strictly selected on the test of merit.

A necessary evil of the Maurya administration was espionage. Both Kautilya and Megasthenes testify to its wide prevalence. While classical writers like Strabo describe as Ephori or Inspector the special class of officers 'entrusted with the superintendence of all that is going on, and it is their duty to report privately to the king', Indian sources designate them as Pradeshtris or Gudha-purushas. The profession of a spy was not looked down upon. Even women-folk were appointed to the espionage service.

Provincial Government: The link between the centre and the provinces into which the empire was divided was maintained through a set of intermediary offices headed by the provincial governor and consisting of a heirarchy of provincial officers. The home provinces of Prachya and Madhyadesha were directly ruled by the Emperor; the administration of the home provinces was usually assigned to princes of the royal blood. Certain territories within the Maurya empire like Saurashtra were allowed to enjoy a certain amount of autonomy. Some cities even enjoyed a democratic form of Government.

Local Government: Megasthenes speaks of the municipal administration of the capital city of Palimbothra (Pataliputra). A commission of thirty members divided into six boards or committees was entrusted with the work of administering the municipal functions in the capital. In addition to special departments placed under their charge they were required, in a collective capacity, to look after all matters concerning public welfare such as the proper maintenance of public works of utility, markets, harbours and regulation of market-prices. The special departmental functions allotted to the

individual boards concerned (i) industrial arts, (ii) care of foreigners, (iii) retail trade and barter, (iv) registration of births and deaths, (v) supervision of manufactures and (vi) collection of tithes on the price of commodities sold. Commenting on these municipal arrangements a western scholar observes: 'The perfection of the arrangements is astonishing even when exhibited in outline. Examination of the departmental details increases our wonder that such an organisation could have been planned and efficiently operated in India in 300 B.C. Akbar had nothing like it and it may be doubted if any of the ancient Greek cities were better organised.' The municipal set-up of Pataliputra as described by Megasthenes probably was the pattern followed in several other developed cities in Mauryan Indian. According to the ambassador-historian there were altogether 118 cities in the empire.

The villages also received due attention from the Government. Each district, administered by an officer named *Sthanika* was divided into a number of villages. Each village was looked after by a village headman and an accountant called *Gopa*. The headman was assisted by an assembly of the chosen representatives of the village. The administrative unit thus formed enjoyed extensive powers over the persons and property belonging to the village and was held responsible for regular payment of royal dues. The Sthanika, assisted by the Gopa, acted as intermediary between the central and the local government units.

Post-Mauryan Polity: The emergence of kingdoms ruled over by non-Indian powers like the Sakas, Yavanas, Parthians, Yueh-chis in the post-Mauryan times led to some modifications in the policy and administrative pattern of the country. The old bureaucratic system no doubt survived the dynastic changes but the foreign conquerors brought with them several institutions which were distinctly non-Indian in character. 'Thus', it has been observed, 'the Persian system of government by satrap was introduced in several provinces of Northern, Western and Southern India, and officials with the Greek titles of *Meridarch* and *Strategos* ruled contemporaneously with functionaries having the Indian designations of *Amatya* and *Mahasenapati*.' The advent of the Scythians also saw an exaltation of monarchy. This is borne out by the high-sounding titles assumed by them and by the deification of rulers. Another notable Scythian innovation was twin systems of *Dvaviajya* and *Yauvarajya*, prevalent in Northern, North-Western and Western India. These systems provided for the

association of the ruler's brother, son or grandson with the conduct of government which was thus shared between them.

It is important to remember that the village and local administration was unaffected by the dynastic changes and remained the most enduring part of the ancient Indian system of Government.

Gupta Administration: The pattern of the Gupta administration was basically the same as that of the Imperial Mauryas. But the position of the monarch had undergone a change. Kingship, since the days of the Scythian rule, had become more exalted than before. The Gupta monarchs, following the example of the Scythian rulers, laid claim to divine right of kingship and came to be regarded as *Achintya-Purusha*, *Lokadhamadeva*, etc. As in Mauryan times the king was assisted by a body of high ministers, but unlike in earlier days, some of these ministers often held office by hereditary rights. It is not definitely known if the central Mantri-Parishad of the earlier period survived till the Gupta days.

The empire was divided into a number of provinces. These were known as *Deshas* or *Bhuktis*. Each province was subdivided into districts called *Pradeshas* or *Vishayas*. Gupta inscriptions mention the names of several Deshas, Pradeshas or Vishayas. The governor of a province was known as *Uparika Maharaja*, while the officer in charge of a district was called *Goptri* or *Vishayapati*. A large number of the officials belonging to these two ranks were recruited from the princes of the royal blood. They were assisted by a large number of bureaucrats known variously as *Dandika*, *Chaura-Uddharanika*, *Dandapasika*, *Nagarashresthi*, *Prathama Kayastha*, etc. The lowest administrative unit, as before, was the *Grama* or the village. The villages were administered by the *Gramikas*, *Mahattaras* and *Bhojakas*.

Outside the bounds of the regular provinces were situated the vassal kingdoms and tribal republics which rendered tribute to the suzerain authority of the Guptas.

Harsha's Empire—Its Administration: Between the fall of the Guptas and the rise of the Pratiharas the largest political unit in Northern India was comprised in the empire of Harshavardhana. The administrative structure of the Pushyabhuti kingdom was substantially the same as that of older times. The emperor, as before, was the head of the state enjoying absolute authority. Absolutism was not, however, synonymous with arbitrary power, for Harsha was unsparing in his efforts to promote the moral and material well-being of his subjects. Hiuen Tsang writes from his personal knowledge

that the king 'was indefatigable and the day was too short for him.' He was regularly on tour visiting the various parts of the empire, attempting to get a first-hand knowledge of the working of the government.

The inscriptions of Harsha testify that the old administrative divisions like *Bhuktis* and *Vishayas* continued. Between the Vishaya and the Grama a new administrative unit known as *Pathaka* is mentioned for the first time.

The Chinese Master of Law was favourably impressed by the working of the Government. The general lot of the people was happy. There was no undue interference by the state with the individual's way of living or movements. In the words of Hiuen Tsang: 'As the government is generous, official requirements are few. Families are not registered and individuals are not subject to forced labour.' Taxes were light. Husbandmen were required to pay one-sixth of their produce. Criminal law, compared with that prevalent in Gupta times, was severe. The usual penalties for serious criminal offence were imprisonment for life, exile or mutilation. For other offences the penalty was fine. Ordeals by fire or water were also in vogue. In spite of the severity of the penal laws, crimes were more frequent than in Gupta times. Hiuen Tsang himself was waylaid on more than one occasion on the high way.

Rajput Polity: The advent of the Rajputs marked a notable deviation from the old bureaucratic pattern of government, though the actual working of the new system is not known in detail due to paucity of source materials. It is, however, clear from the limited evidence available that the early Rajput system was a new type of polity to which the name of clan system of government may be conveniently given. This system was radically different from that of the earlier times. The older system was a highly developed bureaucratic structure having a long course of evolution behind it. Compared to the ancient Indian system the early Rajput system was primitive.

The formation of a Rajput state, however, led to contact between the older bureaucratic system and the newer primitive tribal organisation. As a consequence of this contact the older ideas influenced the new system and thus gradually the original Rajput system was transformed. This is evident from the fact that the Pratihara rulers and their successors continued to assign to their officers such older designations as *Mahamatya, Bhandagarika, Akshapatalika, Sandhivi-*

grahika. In reality, however, the principle that moulded the character of a Rajput state was the maxim—one clan, one state. Thus the supreme power in the state belonged to a clan which was but a minority group in the kingdom, so that the people belonging to communities outside of the ruling class felt little or no desire to identify themselves with the interest of the state as a whole. This imparted to the Rajput polity a weakness which proved to be fatal in its consequences.

South India: In the ancient and early mediaeval ages there was no fundamental difference between the polity and administrative structures of North and South India. Basically they were the same. Nevertheless it is possible to draw attention to some striking features so far as the administrative system of South India is concerned. The monarchs belonging to the Vakataka dynasty, for instance, in several cases, preferred the title of *Samrat* to that of a *rajan* or *nripa*. The Pallava kings used to call themselves *dharmamaharajadhiraja*, indicative of their adherence to Brahmanical faith.

Chola Administration: Of all the South Indian dynasties the Cholas have left most detailed information on the working of the administration set up by them.

At the head of the state stood the king. He was the pivot round which the machinery of the state moved. He was assisted in the discharge of his onerous duties by a body of ministers and high officials. The orders verbally issued by the king were drafted by the royal secretary. During the reign of Rajaraja I and his son royal orders could be proclaimed only after these had been confirmed by the chief secretary (*Olainayakam*) and another highly responsible officer known as the *Perundaram*.

The kingdom was divided into a number of provinces, known as *Mandalam*, administered by viceroys usually recruited from members of the ruling family. Each province was subdivided, for administrative purposes, into a number of divisions, known as *Kottams* or *Valanadus*. The next lower administrative units were the districts or *Nadus* and groups of villages known as *Kurram*. The lowest unit was the village or the *Gramam*.

The most striking feature of the Chola administrative organisation was the institution of popular assemblies at the level of central, provincial and local governments. Each mandalam had its own assembly consisting of peoples' representatives. Important questions like remission of taxes, among others, were referred to the provincial

assemblies for decision. Each *nadu* similarly had its own assembly known as the *Nattar*. Chola inscriptions also reveal the existence of guilds or *Srenis* which had an important role to play in the sphere of local government. The village assembly known as *Ur* also appears to have been entrusted with important functions concerning the administration of the village. Chola records also apeak of a *Sabha* or *Mahasabha* which is supposed to have been an assembly of the villages predominantly inhabited by the Brahmanas. Subject to the general control and supervision of the royal officers the assembly enjoyed considerable authority in regard to disposal of lands, collection of taxes, promotion of primary education and disposal of petty criminal cases. The members elected by lot for a period of one year used to meet in the assembly whose sessions were held in a public hall or in a temple. For proper discharge of duties allotted to the *sabha* it often set up committees empowered to manage public works, charities and maintenance of roads and tanks.

An important feature of the Chola administration was the meticulous care with which periodical surveys of lands were undertaken. It has been observed that 'the lands under cultivation were carefully surveyed and holdings registered, at least a century before the famous Domesday record of William the Conqueror. The inscriptions show that the survey was correct to $\frac{1}{50,000}$ of a square inch.'

The efficiency of the Chola administrative organisation has elicited unqualified praise from an Anglo-Indian administrator like V. A. Smith who writes: 'The particulars...give an impression that the administrative system was well thought out and reasonably efficient. The important place given to the village assemblies assured the Central Government of considerable popular support, and individuals probably submitted readily to the orders of the fellow-villagers who had the force of public opinion behind them.'

Republics and Oligarchies: Monarchy was not the only form of government in ancient India. The existence of republican or oligarchical states can be traced back to at least the age of the Buddha. Such states continued to exist in the days when the Alexandrine historians visited this country. The more prominent instances are those of the *Sabarcae* (on the bank of the Sindhu) and *Nysa*. It is further evident that the non-monarchical forms of government survived in much later times. The Mahabharata, for example, testifies to the existence of republican tribal states in Northern Rajas-

than in the fifth century A.D. One such tribal state was that of the *Yaudheyas*. Other similar tribal states enjoying a republican form of government were the *Malavas* and the *Arjunayanas*. In the subsequent ages following the emergence of the powerful empire of the Guptas and the advent of the Huns, most of the republics in Western India were swept away. It is interesting to note that the desirability of republican or representative form of government was emphasised in the *Santi-Parva* of the Mahabharata. In the words of a modern writer: 'We know very little of their organisation which may have been loosely feudal, with a large number of petty chieftains more or less subordinate to a single head, who held office with their consent and could do little without their help. In any case modern India may take legitimate pride in the fact that though she may not have had democracies in the modern sense, government by discussion was by no means unknown in her ancient civilisation.'

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE ARTS: ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

I. *Architecture*: It is generally held that nearly all the artistic relics of ancient India concern predominantly religious themes; but it would be a mistake to suppose that secular outlook did not find a place in artistic representation. Many artistic remains of ancient India and many more of mediaeval times are but portrayals of the common man's life and aspirations.

So far as the earliest artistic remains are concerned, they are either neolithic columns or seals, buildings, pottery and implements of copper and bronze discovered in the prehistoric sites of the Indus Valley. Sir John Marshall's observations on these findings are illuminating. He writes: 'In no sense can these objects be regarded as products of primitive or archaic art. Small as they are, they demonstrate a thorough comprehension of both work in the round and relief and exhibit a spontaneity and truthfulness to nature of which even Hellenic art might not have been ashamed.'

Relics of ancient artistic achievements of the post-Indus Valley age are not unfortunately available in any appreciable extent till the Mauryan age. The monolithic pillars on which the Asokan edicts were engraved and their finely carved capitals depicting animal figures testify as much to engineering skill as artistic efficiency. In commenting on the Sarnath Capital Vincent Smith writes: 'It would be difficult to find in any country an example of ancient animal sculpture superior or even equal to the beautiful work of art which successfully combines realistic modelling with ideal dignity and is finished in every detail with perfect accuracy.'

The few architectural remains of the Mauryan age which have survived, like the ruins of a hall with a hundred pillars excavated at the site of ancient Pataliputra, attest to the efficiency reached by the ancient Indian architects. Greek visitors who actually saw the capital city in all its splendour and the Chinese pilgrims who could see the gardens and palaces of the Mauryan capital, partly in ruins, have expressed unqualified praise for the level of excellence attained by the Indian artists. Fa-Hien who saw the ruins of the magnificent palace of Pataliputra was so struck with wonder that he thought these were 'made by spirits which Asoka employed.'

The *Stupas* are the most characteristic examples of ancient Indian monuments. These started as earthen burial mounds and later developed as superstructures of brick and plaster and then of stone. According to traditional records Asoka built 84,000 Stupas. Most of them have perished. Only one Stupa discovered in Nepal has retained the form in which it was built by Asoka. A few have survived with marks of enlargements effected and embellishments added in succeeding ages. The most striking of this group is the *Sanchi Stupa* described as 'one of the most striking architectural remains of ancient India.' It is a stupendous structure with a height of 24 metres and a diameter of 37 metres, surrounded by a massive stone railing, which replaced the old wooden fencing. At a later stage, probably towards the end of the first century B.C., four majestic gateways were added to the structure. The sculptural designs on the gateway are products of mature artistic skill, remarkable alike for freshness and vigour.

In course of succeeding ages the Stupas became increasingly ornate. The Stupa of *Amaravati* completed about 200 A.D. was not only larger but also more ornate than that of Sanchi. Its carved panels, wrought with remarkable artistic skill, depicted the entire story of the life of Buddha. Among the still later Stupas, that of *Sarnath* deserves to be mentioned. This tall Stupa, it has been said, 'was once a most imposing structure of beautifully patterned brick-work with a highly cylindrical upper dome rising from a lower hemispherical one, and large images of the Buddha set in gable ends at the cardinal points.'

Another Stupa, viz. the one constructed at *Bharhut* in Sunga times also deserves to be mentioned. Its railing only survives, but the sculptures engraved on them, depicting many incidents from Buddha's life and Jataka stories, are a faithful index of the religious faiths and beliefs and of the social life of the people of the contemporary age. But the Stupa which won the highest renown in Asia was the relic tower erected by Kaniska at Purushapura (Peshawar) over the relics of Buddha. Chinese sources inform us that 'this remarkable monument consisted of a basement in five stages (46 metres), a superstructure of carved wood in 13 storeys (121 metres), surmounted by an iron column with from thirteen to twenty-five gilt copper umbrellas (88), making a total height of 194 metres.' Fa-Hien claims that this was 'the highest tower in Jambudvipa'. Unfortunately, the tower is not traceable even in ruins.

Stupas were also known to have been erected in fairly large number in Southern India. The most important of these monuments were constructed at Bhattiprohe, Ghantasala and Nagarjuna Konda. None of these has, however, survived.

Cave temples are yet another specimen of ancient Indian architecture. These were mostly artificial caves excavated for religious purposes. The earliest known cave temples noted for their simple designs are those of Barabar Hill, near Gaya, dedicated by Asoka to the Ajivika monks. In the later ages cave temples were constructed in greater numbers in several parts of India, and specially in the Western Deccan, under the patronage of the Satavahanas. The most well-known among these was the *Bhaja Cave Temple*, situated near Poona. It is a spacious rock-cut structure with massive pillars, a hall and a small stupa at its farthest end. Another notable cave-temple is the great *Chaitya Hall* at *Karle*, adorned with more embellishments than that of Bhaja. With the Chaitya halls, which were primarily used as meeting halls for Buddhist monks and lay disciples, were associated rock-cut monasteries or *Sangharams*. The most celebrated specimen of this category are the *Ajanta* cave groups, and the later cave-temples of Ellora. The former group consists of twenty-seven caves, the earliest of them dating from the second century B.C. The caves in the latter group are twenty-four in number erected over a long period of time ranging from the second century B.C. to the seventh century A.D.

Fine specimens of temple architecture are known to have existed in the ancient sites of Takshasila and Kashmir. Several temples of the Gupta age have survived; the most famous among them was the one discovered at Deogarh near Jhansi in U.P. It was probably erected in the sixth century A.D. Another temple which won celebrity by reason of its design and execution was the *Martand* temple of Kashmir, probably erected in the eighth century A.D.

The early mediaeval age was rich in its achievements in temple-architecture. Orissa developed a type of temple-architecture marked by peculiarities of its own. The most characteristic feature of Orissan temples is its *Sikhara* or tower with rounded top crowned by a *Kalasa* placed on a flat stone disc known as *Amalaka*. The most remarakble products of Orissa's architectural genius were the *Lingaraja* temple, Bhuvaneswar, Jagannathdeva temple at Puri and the Sun-temple or the Black Pagoda of Konarak. Another distinctive type of temple-architecture is supplied by the *Khajuraho* group of temples erected

by the *Chandellas* of Bundelkhand. Less in extent than the Orissan counterpart, the temples of Khajuraho, generally speaking, comprised a sanctuary, an assembly hall and a portico—all treated as one whole piece, and not disjointed as in the temples of Orissa. The most well-known temple in the Khajuraho group is the temple of *Kandariya-Mahadeo* built about 1000 A.D. A fairly large number of temples were also constructed in several sites of Rajasthan and Gujarat. The *Chaulukyas* or *Solankis* are known to have been great patrons of temple-architecture. According to traditional accounts, Siddharaja Jayasinha, the greatest among the Chaulukya rulers, was a great builder and that no Indian ruler built as many temples as Siddharaja had caused to be erected. The Jaina temples of Mt. Abu are the best surviving specimens of the Western Indian style of temple-architecture. The *Paramaras* of Malwa adorned the cities of Dhara, Bhojpur, Dipalpur, Bhilsa and Udaypur. Of the Nilkantheswara temple erected by Udayaditya at Udaypur it has been said that 'as every part of the temple is carved with great precision and delicacy and on the whole is quite perfect at the present day, there are few temples of this class which give a better idea of the style than this one.'

South India, too, made remarkable contributions to the development of Indian architecture both ancient and mediaeval. The Aihole temples constructed under the auspices of the Chalukya rulers are said to contain the earliest structural temple known in India. The achievements of the Chalukyas were, however, exceeded by those of their rivals, the Pallavas. Cave-temples were erected under the patronage of the *Pallava* rulers on a more lavish and elaborate scale than before. The seven rock-cut Pagodas of Mahavalipuram are regarded as the best specimens of the Dravidian style of Indian architecture. The capital city of Kanchi could also boast of remarkable architecture. The *Rashtrakutas* too developed the art of cave-temple architecture to a great extent. The most remarakble achievement in this sphere of architecture practised earlier in Northern Indian was the great Kailashnath Temple erected in the days of Krishna I (*c.* 756-773 A.D.). It is a fine massive structure built of solid rock, comprising the main shrine, a number of smaller shrines and cloisters, besides hall, pillars and gateways. To the *Cholas* belongs the credit of developing the Dravidian style to greater perfection. Their most remarkable achievements are the great Saiva temple at the capital city of Tanjore built by Rajaraja the Great (985-

1014 A.D.) and the temple built by his successor Rajendra Chola at his new capital of Gangaikonda Cholapuram. Both these temples, the former considered as the largest temple built in India up to that time, reveal the replacement of the earlier modest Pallava tower by a huge pyramid with full upright base and a domed finial at the top. At a later stage was added the technique of massive and richly decorated *Gopuram* which often exceeded the height of the Sikhara of the temple itself. The temples of Halebid and Belur, much simpler in design and devoid of towers, are the legacies of the Hoysalas to South Indian architecture, noted alike for its grace and vigour.

II. *Sculpture*: Compared to the architect's art, that of the sculptor reveals a greater continuity. It has been supposed that 'the earliest sculpture of historical times shows a generic likeness to that of Harappa.' There is, for instance, a striking resemblance between the animal and human figures appearing on the Harappan seals with those carved in much later days. On the basis of such similarities it has been suggested that the animal sculptures on the Asokan capitals 'were those of a school directly descended from the engravers of the Indus seals.' The gateways of Bharhut and Sanchi also bear witness to the excellent skill acquired by the Indian artists in the sphere of sculptural technique. The figures depicted on the Sanchi Stupa are indicative of even greater perfection in style and form.

In Kushan times two distinct schools of sculpture can be traced, known respectively as the *Mathura* and *Gandhara* schools. The images of *Yakshas* and *Yakshinis*, of Jaina Tirthankaras and of Buddha and the Bodhisatvas figure prominently in the Mathura sculptural pieces. Unlike the Mathura school, the school of Gandhara was largely influenced by Graeco-Roman art and its technique. Thus while the subject-matter remained Indian, the forms and techniques employed in conceiving and executing them were distinctly Graeco-Roman. Thus it is found that 'the images of Buddha appear in the likeness of Apollo, the Yaksha Kuvera is posed in the fashion of the Phidian Zeus and so on.'

In the earlier Buddhist sculptures, like those of Sanchi and Bharhut, the image of Buddha is conspicuously absent. He is represented therein through symbols only. But with the emergence of the Gandhara school full-figure Buddha images for the first time began to appear—a practice which continued to inspire the Indian artists till much later days.

The attainments of the Gupta age in the realm of sculptural productions were remarkable. The plastic remains of this age are striking because of the sincerity and serenity displayed therein. The most famous of these, it has been said, is 'the icon of the Buddha turning the wheel of the Law or preaching his first sermon, which more than any other Indian sculpture, seems to convey the true message of Buddhism.' The carvings on the temple of Deogarh are also brilliant examples of Gupta sculptural art. The mediaeval age too carried on brisk activities in sculptural ventures. It was under the Imperial Pratiharas that the characteristic features of the mediaeval works of art began to develop. The Chandellas, the Chaulukyas and the Paramaras vied with one another in promoting the art of the sculptor. The works of these periods are too numerous to be mentioned in detail. The image of Saraswati carved in the reign of Paramara Bhojadeva is regarded as one of the most splendid specimens of mediaeval sculpture. An image of Parvati carved out of hard white stone is considered yet another masterpiece of Indian sculpture. The icons of the Pala and Sena periods mostly carved out of black stone were remarkable for their fine polish.

In the Deccan, too, the art of sculpture made considerable progress as is evidenced by the exquisite embellishments in Bhaja and Udaygiri caves, Amaravati Stupas and in the temples of Bhuvaneswar and Konarak. Farther south the temples of Aihole and Badami contain fine illustrations of ancient sculpture. The most outstanding example of Pallava sculpture is provided by that of Mahavalipuram. The great relief of the 'Descent of the Ganges' (?) exhibited therein is regarded as one of the finest specimens of ancient Indian sculpture. The Ajanta and Ellora cave sculpture bear traces of Pallava sculptural art. The bronze icons of the Chola period have been justly described as 'the most outstanding products of the Dravidian artists of the later middle ages'. As a modern critic writes: 'When stone-sculpture suffered a sad decline in the North, from the twelfth century onwards, South Indian bronze image-workers went on producing their finest masterpieces by the thousand. These bronzes are among the most priceless heirlooms of Indian art, and include, besides the more famous dancing Siva images, some of the best effigies of royalty and of the Vaishnava and Saiva saints. It is a constant output, lasting a full thousand years, and it has not yet ceased.'

III. *Painting*: Though known to have been practised since the days of remote antiquity, painting has not survived to the extent

that architecture and scultpure have done. The earliest survivals are the murals of the cave-temples. A large number of them are primitive but a quite a few display great artistic imagination and skill. The paintings on the Ajanta, Ellora and Bagh caves are a class by themselves and their subjects are more secular than religious. The influence of the Ajanta style of painting has been traced in the cave-temples of Badami and some sites of the Tamil land and Ceylon. Indian painting also appears to have influenced to some extent the murals and paintings found in many sites of Chinese Turkestan and several other parts of Central Asia.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

INDIAN CULTURE ABROAD

GEOGRAPHY was no barrier to India's cultural contact with the outside world even from the dawn of history. The neolithic people living in India in the days of remote antiquity are supposed by many to have had relations with the Far East and the Indian Archipelago. In the days when the Indus Valley civilisation flourished, there is evidence of India's contact with the countries of Western and Central Asia. The discovery of common animal figures on the seals and the construction of corbelled arches in walls, among others, point to cultural contact between India and Mesopotamia. The contact thus established, there is reason to believe, survived in the Vedic and following ages.

Leaving behind prehistoric times, as we enter the historical period we find that India continued to maintain relations with the countries with which she was surrounded on the north, the east and the west. The Persian and Macedonian conquests gave an impetus to the cultural contact between Western Asia and India which had a much earlier beginning. The missionary and philanthropic activities of Asoka did much to promote and strengthen India's cultural contact with the countries in Western Asia, Northern Africa and South-East Europe. There may be some doubt about the claim that the Buddhist faith was embraced by people living in the Hellenistic kingdoms referred to in the Asokan edicts; but there can be little doubt that long after the reign of Asoka had ended, the people of Alexandria showed a great deal of interest in the teachings of Buddha.

The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* speaks of active relations between India and the western countries. Trade prepared the way for mutual relation on the cultural level. The influx of the Bactrian Greeks and the establishment of *Yona* settlements in India account for exchange between the Indian and the Hellenic people on the cultural plane. Thus, while it is possible to detect certain Hellenistic elements, there are also evidences of India's influence on Hellenic life and thought. The conversion of Heliodorus to Vaishnavism and that of Menander to Buddhism attest to the influence of Indian religion on individual Greeks. The Indianisation of the Greeks settled in India was facilitated by the institution of mixed marriages.

The traffic was by no means one way. 'There is good reason to believe that the Buddhist teaching was considerably modified by contact with the Greek gods, and that the use of images in particular as an essential element in the Buddhist cult was mainly due to Greek example. In astronomy Hellenic influence is indisputable; many Indian astronomical terms are evidently derived from the Greek.' The claim that the poetry of Homer 'was sung by Indians who had translated it into their own language and modes of expression' is no doubt exaggerated, and the further claim that there are striking similarities between Greek fables and the stories told in Indian sources is likely to be superficial; but there is reason to suppose that the two civilisations did react on each other in various spheres of thought and expression appreciably, though not deeply.

The penetration of Indian culture in Central Asian countries was very deep-rooted. The mountain-passes along the north-western frontiers facilitated travel between India and Western Tibet, Russian Turkestan, Chinese Turkestan and Eastern China. Indian civilisation followed the route of traders and travellers. The archaeological remains discovered by Sir Aurel Stein have revealed the spread of Buddhist and Brahmanical culture in Khotan and other parts of Central Asia. This is proved by the discovery of the remains of Stupas and monasteries as well as large mass of manuscripts in Indian languages and scripts. One of these manuscripts found at Khotan on the Dhammapada belonged to the second century A.D. Another striking manuscript was a medical treatise in Sanskrit written in the fourth century A.D. Among other interesting finds is the important group of 182 frescoed caves of the thousand Buddhas. Stein refers to at least 3,000 Sanskrit documents and hundreds of paintings. On the basis of these discoveries it has been supposed that in the Kushan period Buddhism made headway in these regions and the nomadic inhabitants of the land adopted the faith in fairly large numbers. Brahmanical and Buddhist religion flourished side by side as late as the days of Hiuen Tsang.

From Central Asia Buddhism spread to China. From the first century A.D. there was a continuous flow of scholars, monks and missionaries to China, following in the footsteps of Kashyap, Matanga and Dharamaratna. This was reciprocated by Chinese scholars and pilgrims who paid, at great sacrifice of personal comforts, visits to the Holy Land of Buddhism. They carried a large number of Buddhist texts to China and caused them to be translated into Chinese.

Conspicuous service in the work of translation was rendered by the great Indian scholar, Kumarajiva, who is supposed to have rendered the works of Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Vasuvandhu in the language of China.

From China Buddhism spread to Korea, and from Korea again to Japan. We are informed on the authority of It-Sing that a number of Korean scholars joined the university of Nalanda as students.

Tibet, too, felt the impact of Buddhism. The well-known Tibetan king Srong-tsan Gampo introduced in his kingdom in the seventh century the Indian alphabets used in Khotan, which again was derived from the Gupta alphabet. At a later stage Buddhist scholars and teachers from Vikramasila and Nalanda went to Tibet and preached the Mahayana form of Buddhism. Tibetan monks also came to India and caused several Buddhist texts to be translated into Tibetan language.

India's cultural contact with the South-Eastern Asian countries was even more intimate and widespread. While the contact with Central Asia was mainly the outcome of cultural and commercial enterprises, those with S. E. Asian countries were chiefly political and commercial and partly religious. It is possible to trace the beginning of a systematic policy of colonisation from the first century A.D. culminating in the establishment of centres of Indian activities in Annam, Cochin-China and the islands of the Pacific. The route along which the colonial efforts were directed was by land across Malay and by sea through the straits to Singapore.

We know from the numerous stories recorded in *Kathasaritsagara* that ships from the Indian coastal towns were on frequent voyages to such destinations as Kataha (modern Kedah), Karpanadvipa (the Camphor Island) and Suvarna (Sumatra). Traditional accounts preserved in the *Jatakas* and the *Kathasaritsagara* refer to regular voyages undertaken by Indian merchants to *Suvarnabhumi* which was a generic term denoting several lands in the South-East. The immense wealth with which the traders came back made them call this land the land of gold or *Suvarnabhumi*.

Trade, however, gave way, before long, to political domination. We find references to kingdoms in Cambodia, Annam, the Malay peninsula and the islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali and Borneo, ruled by princes bearing distinctly Indian names from the second century A.D. Sanskrit inscriptions as well as Chinese literature testify to the existence of flourishing Indian centres in the Far Eastern world. The

impact of the political control in the cultural sphere was both instantaneous and tremendous. Saivism became widely prevalent in these areas and, to some extent, Buddhism too. The way of living, expression and outlook of the people living in these areas were influenced, though in a modified manner, by those of the ruling dynasties. Thus cults and institutions of Indian origin survived in vast areas of S. E. Asia for many years even after the Hindu rule had ended in the mainland.

The two most well-known kingdoms in S. E. Asia were *Champa* and *Kambuja*. The former was co-extensive with later Annam. The latter, called Funan in Chinese records, comprised the southern part of modern Cambodia. The founder of the Kambuja kingdom was Kaundiya, described in a Champa inscription dated 658 A.D. as 'the greatest of the Brahmanas'. According to a Chinese source, 'more than a thousand Brahmans from India reside there. The people follow their doctrines and give them their daughters in marriage. They read their sacred books day and night.' Chinese accounts, in referring to the inhabitants of a small principality under the kingdom of Funan, say: 'They all learn Brahmanical writings and pay great reverence to the Buddha's law. There are temples of Buddhist and Brahman priests....At the king's court one sees many Brahmins come from India in order to profit by their munificence.' In course of time Kambuja held its sway over the whole of Cambodia, Cochin-China, Laos and even of Burma and the Malay peninsula. There is evidence of an embassy from Funan reaching India at about the middle of the third century A.D. Most of the rulers had Indian names. They were liberal patrons of Sanskrit learning and a number of them were well versed in Indian scriptures, philosophy and sciences. The inscriptions issued by the kings bear extensive quotations from the Vedas, the epics and the Puranas. The great massive temple of Angkor Vat originally dedicated to Vishnu is a monument to the tremendous impact of India on those parts of South-East Asia which came under the political-cum-cultural domination of India. It is possibly the largest known temple of the world. Scattered throughout the kingdom can be found some 600 monuments in ruins.

Hindu colonies in Burma date back to the pre-Christian days. Authentic details of the number, extent and political set-up of these colonies are not available. It appears, however, that the name *Talaing* applied to the inhabitants of lower Burma was derived

from Telengana, though all the colonists did not come from this particular region. In the middle of the eleventh century a powerful kingdom, known as *Pagan* (Arimardanapura) existed in Central Burma under King Anawratha (Aniruddha). During his reign the people adopted the religion and script of the Mons, which were of Indian origin. It has been suggested that 'the entire culture and civilisation of Burma was of Indian origin and although the Chinese were nearer neighbours of the Burmese, and more allied to them in blood and speech, they exercised no influence, worth speaking of, in this direction.' It is highly significant that Burma adopted the Pali language of the sacred texts. The great Ananda temple of Pagan was planned and executed by Indian architects. 'Everything in this temple,' it has been said, 'from Sikhara to basement as well as the numerous stone sculptures found in its corridors and the terracotta plaques adorning its basement and terraces, bear the indubitable stamp of Indian genius and craftsmanship. . . . In this sense we may take it, therefore, that the Ananda, though built in the Burmese capital, is an Indian temple.'

Siam (or Thailand) also came under the domination of the colonists from India in the third century A.D. No powerful kingdom arose in this region but there is evidence that Indian religion and literature exercised a profound influence on the life and character of the people living in these areas. Available evidence points to the existence of an Indianised kingdom named *Dvaravati* in Central Siam. Parts of the country later known as Yunnam were formerly known as Gandhara and Mithila, reminiscent of connections with India. The prevalence of Buddhism and of alphabets of Indian origin are also indicative of Indian influence on the life and thought of the inhabitants of these regions. The Buddhist temple built by the Thais who conquered Siam in the eleventh century was modelled on the temple at Bodh Gaya.

Several Hindu colonies also existed in the Malay peninsula during the early years of the Christian era. Inscriptions written in Sanskrit as well as the remains of Brahmanical and Buddhist temples point to the conclusion that 'the region around the Bay of Bandon was the cradle of Further Eastern culture, inspired by waves of Indian influence.'

There is also evidence of the existence of a Hindu kingdom in Java, Sumatra and Borneo during the first three centuries of the Christian era. There is a tradition that in the second century A.D.,

20,000 Indians arrived in Java from Kalinga. Fa-Hien who visited the island on his way back to China from India speaks of the prevalence of Brahmanical faith in the island kingdom. This kingdom which extended its sway over the Malay peninsula became the scene of Indian political activities under the celebrated Sailendra dynasty from the eighth century A.D. It-Sing who spent eight years in the Sumatran kingdom of Sri-Vijaya says that the court ceremonials were akin to those prevalent in India and that Sanskrit was well cultivated. The kings of the dynasty followed the Mahayana form of Buddhism. One of the Sailendra rulers, Balaputradeva, is known to have sent to the Emperor Devapala of Bengal an embassy requesting the grant of five villages for the maintenance of the monastery he had built at Nalanda. The great Bengali Buddhist scholar *Kumaraghosha* acted as preceptor or guru of a Sailendra king. One of the greatest achievements of this dynasty in the realm of art was the construction of the famous Buddhist temple of Barabadour. Its images and sculptures are regarded as the finest examples of Indo-Javanese art. Indian art and literature flourished in a most enduring manner in Java. This is borne out by the ruins of hundreds of temples in various parts of the island-kingdom as well as by the popularity of the Indian epics which lingers even today in the shadow-plays known as *Wajang*.

Political domination of India in the S. E. Asian countries was no doubt an important phenomenon illustrating the remarkable fact that it survived in the islands across the seas long after Hindu rule had ended in the mainland of India. But the importance of the political achievements is exceeded by the importance of attainments in the realm of culture which enabled Indian religion, laws and literature to mould the lives of the people in the islands who had long been accustomed to primitive ways of life and living. The story of the spread of Indian culture in S. E. Asian countries is an edifying one, showing alike the vigour and assimilative power of Hinduism.

PART II

THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

THE ADVENT of Islam is usually regarded as the dividing line between ancient and mediaeval periods of Indian history. This is more rational than seeking a distinction between Hindu and Muslim periods of Indian history. But opinion on the advisability of accepting the Muslim advent as the dividing line in the history of India is by no means unanimous. Many would be inclined to seek it in other phenomena than the rise of the Muslim power in India. The advent of the Muslims as signalised by the Arab invasion in Sind hardly caused any stir. It was considered a passing phase, hardly different from the periodical incursions of other foreign elements on the soil of India. A period of nearly five centuries intervened between the Arab conquest of Sind and the establishment of Muslim rule in Delhi. Even the so-called Delhi Sultanate was not an all-India, or even nearly an all-India unit, except for a brief span of twenty years under the Khaljis and an even briefer span of ten years under the Tughlaks. Even then the transfer of power at the political level did not mean the abandonment of the old ways of life so far as the majority of the population of the vast country was concerned. Islam had failed to make of India a Muslim country.

Source-Materials

Mediaeval India is richer than the pre-Muslim period of Indian history so far as source-materials are concerned. For the period following the advent of the Muslims, it is not necessary to depend on stray, incidental and not unoften exaggerated information gleaned from literary works of a predominantly non-historical work, besides inscriptions and coins. Here we are in possession of rich and copious materials supplied by Muslim chroniclers. They are not without obvious limitations, mainly arising out of their proneness to religiosity inducing them to sacrifice historical truths too often to religious zeal. Besides they followed, as a rule, the model set by the scholars of the Islamic world outside India. A large number of them enjoyed the patronage of the ruling princes and looked hardly beyond the court and the capital. In the circumstances neither impartiality nor comprehensiveness can be expected of them. Nevertheless, their value is derived from their contemporaneity. Minhaj-

uddin wrote a general history of the Muslim world, *Tabaqut-i-Nasiri*, in which Muslim India up to the sixties of the thirteenth century figures as a part of world history. Ziauddin Barani in his work entitled *Tarikh-i-Firoz shahi* took up the story from where Minhajuddin ends and carried it up to the middle of the next century. *Fatuhat-i-Firoz shahi*, a small work, barely of 32 pages, attributed to Firoz Shah Tughlak himself, gives a brief account of the Sultan's reign and affords us glimpses into the religious background in which the administrative measures of the Sultan were conceived. Another historical work written about the middle of the fourteenth century A.D. is *Futah-us-Salatin*. It deals with the period from the rise of the Ghaznivid to the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak. Its author was Isami who was forced to leave Delhi because of the tyrannical acts of Muhammad bin Tughlak and take up residence at Daulatabad where he composed his work. Glimpses into contemporary history are also afforded by the writings of Amir Khasru, though he was essentially a poet and not a historian. Shams-i-Siraj Afif, a contemporary of Sultan Firoz, wrote a full account of the Sultan's reign.

The period of the Sayyid rule found its main historian in Yahya bin Ahmad Sarhind who wrote *Tarikh-i-Mubarak shahi*, dealing with the period from the reign of Muizzuddin Ghori to the accession of Sultan Muhammad in 1434 A.D.

Dynastic histories like those of Gujarat, Gulburga and Bidar under Muslim rule are available in regard to the period of the disintegration of the *Tughlakshahi* empire, but no general history of India of the closing years of the Delhi Sultanate is traceable. For historical works of real merit we have to wait till after the transference of power to the Mughals. The memoirs of *Babar* and *Jahangir*, the works of *Jauhar* and *Gulbadan Begum*, official chronicles like *Padishahnama*, *Alamgirnama*, and *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri*, Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-lubab* have their importance as source-materials for the various periods of Mughal rule, but the two most outstanding productions in the field of historical literature were Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Akbarnama*.

Indian Literature: The most valuable Indian sources relating to early mediaeval history are supplied by Rajput inscriptions and literature in the form of bardic chronicles and ballads. The Muslim chronicles provide us with one side of the picture and are not without bias. A dependable knowledge of the period is not possible without taking into account the Rajput sources.

Other important Indian sources related to the later Muslim period are the Marathi chronicles. The most important among those are the *Sabhasad Bakhar*. The Gurumukhi works including the celebrated *Granth Sahib* are of considerable help in tracing the origin and growth of Sikhism and Sikh power.

Accounts of Foreign Travellers: The earliest and one of the most well-known foreign visitors who wrote valuable accounts of the life and times as seen by them is the Morôccan traveller *Ibn Batutah*. He lived for fourteen years in India, of which eight years were spent in Delhi. His *Rehala* or travels furnish us with important details relating not only to the main political events of the period, but also to the contemporary social and economic life and the judicial and military institutions of the Tughlakshahi period of the Sultanate. *Abdur Razzaq*, the envoy of Persia to the court of the Zamorin of Calicut, visited Vijayanagar and left us valuable information about the historic kingdom, its people and government.

A number of European travellers also wrote accounts of what they had seen and heard while in India. The earliest among them were the Franciscan monk *John of Monte Corvino* and *Marco Polo*, both of whom passed through India towards the close of the thirteenth century. In the first quarter of the next century came the Florentine monk *John of Marigerolli*. *Nicolo Conti* from Italy, *Athanasius Nikitin* (1470) from Russia and the Portuguese *Barbosa* (1500-1516) and *Domengos Paes* (1500-1502) are also indispensable guides for the history of the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries in India. Their successors who came in increasingly larger numbers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from *Ralph Fitch* to *Manucci*, have enriched the historical literature about India for the period of the Mughal rule through their informative, though not consistently accurate, account of their impressions gained in this country.

Archaeological Evidence: Coins and inscriptions have their importance, though of a lesser degree compared with the ancient period. They yield us, in very few instances, new items of information. Their importance is, however, derived from the fact that they corroborate information gathered from independent sources and are a test of the authenticity of such sources. They are particularly valuable in fixing chronology, order of succession and extent of dominions of the rulers with whom they deal. As observed by Lane-Poole: 'As a rule we may look upon Muhammedan coins as the surest foundation for an exact history of the dynasties by which

they were issued.... The year of accession, the extent of his dominions, his relations with neighbouring powers and with the spiritual chief of his religion are all facts for which we may look with confidence to his coins.'

The monuments of this period are far more numerous than those of the pre-Muslim era. As for all ages, the monuments of this period are an indispensable aid to the proper understanding of the artistic, cultural and even economic history of the country.

Stages in the Muslim Advent in India

The Arab conquest of Sind is usually regarded as the first chapter in the history of Muslim advent in India. But the story of the Muslim contact with India dates from much earlier times. The conversion of the Arabs to Islam gave an impetus to their activities in various phases of national life including commerce. It was quest for trade which brought hosts of Arab merchants to the southern and western coastal regions of India. The first chapter of Muslim advent in India is thus concerned with activities of a peaceful nature.

The second phase was, however, of a military character. There is evidence of a naval expedition led by the Arabs against the western coast in about 637 A.D. But it was not till more than seventy years after that a well-planned and more ambitious project for territorial expansion was conceived. The Arab power was then at its height with its authority entrenched over extensive areas beyond Arabia in Asia and Africa. The expedition against Sind in India is no doubt to be studied in the context of this growing emergence of Arab ascendancy as a militant power, but the immediate pretext was the provocation of piratical activities in the coastal area of Debal in Sind to which eight ships belonging to the Caliph fell victim. The first attempt failed. But a second expedition was ordered by Hajjaj, the Governor of Iraq (712 A.D.). Its command was entrusted to a young army officer named Muhammad bin Qasim. Debal was the first target of attack. It fell almost immediately. The king of Sind, Dahir, offered resistance but failed. He died fighting. His heroic wife carried on the fight for some time, but finding that resistance would be of no avail, the valiant queen burnt herself to death, along with other ladies, in order to escape dishonour. The Arab commander is said to have massacred 6,000 men while taking occupation of the fortress of Rawar. This was followed by the capture of Brahmanabad, Alor and Multan in succession. The lower Indus

valley thus passed under Muslim occupation. The conquerors did not remain content and wanted to push their conquests in parts of Rajputana, Malwa and Gujarat. For about two decades after the conquest of Debal, Muslim expeditions in lands beyond Sind and Multan were intermittent. But these attempts were foiled and the conquerors were forced to remain content with the possession of Sind and Multan. The Pratiharas played a great and impressive role in the resistance against the Muslims.

For about two centuries from about the middle of the eighth to the first quarter of the tenth century the Imperial Pratiharas acted as an effective bulwark against the Arab invaders. Thus while the success of Muslim arms elsewhere in the world was phenomenal, in India their success was of a very limited extent and character. The decline and dissolution of the Pratihara empire in the middle of the tenth century A.D. synchronised, fortunately for India, with the decline in the fortunes of the Abbasid Caliphate so that the militant Arabs posed no problem for India in the years following the disruption of the Pratihara empire.

It was not till nearly half a century had elapsed since the fall of the Imperial Pratiharas that India was faced with the third phase of Muslim aggression in India. Its leaders were the Turkish rulers of Ghazni in Afghanistan. This principality was founded by an adventurer named Alaptigin in 963 A.D. His slave and son-in-law Sabuktagin who succeeded him to the throne, in a bid to add to the power and prestige of the newly founded kingdom, made war on the neighbouring Hindu Shahi kingdom which stretched from Laghman to the river Chenub. The struggle thus started was a protracted one and survived the lives of Sabuktagin and his contemporary Hindu Shahi king Jaipal. Mahmud who succeeded Sabuktagin (998 A.D.) was an exceptionally vigorous warrior possessing uncommon zeal and insatiable ambition. As a contemporary Muslim writer says: 'He made it obligatory on himself to undertake every year an expedition to Hind.' Wolseley Haig calculates the number of such almost annual expeditions as seventeen. At first these were directed against the Hindu Shahi kingdom. Jaipal and his son Anandapal fought as best as they could. The story of a Hindu confederacy fighting under the leadership of Anandapal against the Ghaznivid Sultan is probably a myth. But the war ultimately proved to be disastrous for Anandapal who was forced to remove his capital to Nandana situated on the northern spur

of the Salt Range region till it fell before the Ghaznivid attack in the reign of Bhimapal who succeeded Trilochanapal, the son of Anandapal.

Mahmud's success was not confined to his victories over the Hindu Shahis alone. He brought Multan under his control, and in course of a series of successive campaigns captured the important fortresses of Bhatinda, Narayanpur (in Alwar) as well as rich cities like Thaneswar, Mathura and Kanauj in the Ganges-Jumna valley. Mahmud's progress, in spite of spectacular success, was by no means without some rebuff. His attempts directed on two successive occasions against Kashmir did not succeed. Nor did he succeed in his attempts to subjugate the Chandella ruler Vidyadhara who had offended the Sultan by challenging and killing Rajyapala, King of Kanauj, for his cowardly submission to Mahmud. At the end of two campaigns, both of an indecisive character, Mahmud thought it prudent to enter into friendly relations with his erstwhile Chandella antagonist.

The most well-known expedition led by Sultan Mahmud was the one directed against Somnath (1025-1026 A.D.), situated within the Chaulukya kingdom of Gujarat. No contemporary account of the sack of the famous temple is available; Muslim records, however, give us details of how, overcoming all resistance, Mahmud captured the temple-city and returned home laden with immense and almost immeasurable quantities of spoils.

The Somnath raid is typical of Mahmud's expeditions in India. He was no proselytiser. He did not covet territories either, though the mastery over the Punjab virtually passed under his control. His real motive was spoliation. Mercenary instinct rather than religious zeal was his prime motive and his role in India was no better than that of 'a bandit operating on a large scale', however different his role might have been from the point of view of the kingdom inherited or the religion professed by him. The death of Mahmud in 1030 A.D. meant a respite for India which was not troubled for about the next half a century with the menace of Muslim aggression.

The fourth phase in the advent of Islam in India was dominated by the House of Ghori which had emerged on the decline and at the expense of the Ghaznivids as the most reckonable Muslim power in the immediate vicinity of India. While the Arab efforts to extend their sway beyond Sind and Multan had failed, and the raids of the Ghaznivids were not prompted by the political desire of terri-

torial acquisition, the House of Ghori from the beginning set itself to the task of fulfilling its desire for political aggrandisement. The state of disintegration into which India had fallen since the disappearance of the Imperial Pratiharas saw the major states in Northern India engaged in rivalries with one another, each making a bid for restoration of unity under its own auspices to the exclusion of the other. This reduced, if not eliminated, the chance of united or organised resistance. It was left to individual states to meet the Ghori challenge as best as they could. Muhammad Ghori had conquered in a piecemeal fashion. His first victims were Multan and Uch (1175 A.D.). Next came the turn of Gujarat. His first onslaught (1178 A.D.) on the Chaulukyas failed, but he persisted and within a few years made himself master of the Lower Sind region.

His next encounter was fought against the Chahamanas, then under the rule of Prithviraja III, well-known in legends. In the first battle of Tarain (1191 A.D.) Ghori was defeated, but in the second engagement fought next year on the same plain, the verdict of the first battle was reversed. Prithviraja was defeated, captured and killed (1192 A.D.). His death meant the removal of the last valiant Rajput of his days and made the task of the Ghori leader less difficult. With Ajmere and Delhi now in his possession, in addition to Multan, Uch and the Punjab, he was at an advantage over his sole surviving enemy, viz. Jayacchandra, the Gahadavala king of Kanauj. Muhammad had left India on entrusting the conduct of campaigns to his able lieutenant Qutbuddin. He justified the confidence reposed in him by seizing possession of the cities of Baran, Meerut and Aligarh in succession. Muhammad returned in 1194 A.D. and immediately engaged in battle with Jayacchandra. At Chandwar, on the Jumna, the two contending armies met. The Gahadavalas were defeated and their king was among the slain. This sealed the fate of Northern India. In quick turns came the submission of Asni, Banaras, Ranthambhor, Bayana, Gwalior and Anhilwara. Attempts at recovery of Ajmere by the Chahamanas were defeated. Kalanjar too fell before the Muslim armies and its ruler Chandella Paramardideva was compelled to 'place the collar of subjection round his neck'.

In Eastern India too the Muslims won laurels. One of Qutbuddin's lieutenants, Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad Bhaktyar Khalji, an adventurer, extended Muslim authority over large areas in South

Bihar, Nadia and Varendrabhumi comprising Malda, Dinajpore, Murshidabad and Birbhum. With the conquest of these regions, the foundations for the advent of the Delhi Sultanate were well laid. The Muslim conquest of India was now an accomplished fact.

Character of the Muslim Advent and Conquest

The Muslim advent appeared to the Indians to be of the same character as that of the innumerable foreign hordes who are known to have come to India in endless streams from almost the beginning of history. The fact that the Muslims, unlike many of the pre-Muslim foreign immigrants, represented a mature and organised civilisation and also the more important fact that their cults and institutions in many respects ran counter to those of the Indians were not taken into account at first. The reaction of the Indians to this particular type of immigrants was thus one of indifference at the beginning. That the urgency of the 'Muslim problem' was not felt for many centuries was also due to the fact that not till the rise of the House of Ghori no sustained efforts were directed by the Muslims against this country. The Arabs who were the first to enter the field remained content with their possessions in Sind and Multan. Compared to the success attained by the Abbasid Caliphate in other parts of the world, their success in India was insignificant. Then for a period of half a century after the decline of the Abbasids, India was free from Muslim menace. And then the challenge came in the form of the Ghaznivid militant bid. But since this was unattended with any scheme of territorial conquest and concerned itself only with the collection of spoils, India could afford to retain her indifference. The Ghori phase also did not produce any serious reaction. This was partly because of the piecemeal nature of the conquests sought and partly because of the inability of the Indian powers to combine owing to mutual conflicts with one another. Moreover, for about a century after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate till the Khalji bid for imperialism, the areas of the Muslim dominions were not considerable in the context of the vastness of the country. The Muslim ruling power, fortified with the awareness of the exclusive and superior nature of their faith, refrained from seeking an understanding of the life and conditions of the people over whom they ruled or by whom they were surrounded. The Hindus too, relying on a belief in the superiority of their culture and religion, avoided contact, as far as possible, with the ruling class

and preferred to live in isolation. The proselytising efforts of Islam were looked upon with positive resentment by the Hindus but they were powerless and thus felt helpless. It was only in the late fourteenth century after Timur had failed in his bid to destroy idolatry that the Hindus, who had lived now for many years with the Muslims and came to know them more intimately than before, were in a mood to look back and think in terms of understanding and tolerance. The 'arrogance of the Hindus' of which Alberuni speaks was gone just as the zeal of the Muslims for 'showing the light of the Shariat' to the infidels had damped. In consequence both were ready to meet each other half-way, and in the next two centuries (fifteenth and sixteenth) both learnt to respect the teachings of great masters like Nanak, Kabir and Chaitanya who taught that in the ultimate analysis the essence of all religions was but the same.

Failure of Hindu Resistance: The progress of Muslim arms in India was no doubt slow compared to their phenomenal success elsewhere. The slowness was partly due to the weakness of the local Muslim leaders after Sind had passed into their possession and partly to the determined resistance offered by the Imperial Pratiharas. It has been suggested that the imperial unity under the Pratiharas was but a response to the challenge of Muslim invasion of Sind. This may or may not be a correct appraisal, but in the post-Pratihara period the urge for sustained, united or even organised resistance against the Muslim challenge was lamentably lacking. The powers preferred to carry on their struggle with one another, oblivious of the need for sinking their differences in the face of the common enemy. This is surprising, for pre-Muslim days record traditions of united resistance under a Vikramaditya or a Satavahana against foreign inroads. In the Pratihara and post-Pratihara period instances of individual heroes like those of Dahir, Mihira Bhoja, Anandapal and Prithviraja Chahamana are not lacking, but there is no evidence of organised or confederate efforts or resistance. This is to be mainly attributed to the evil effects of the new form of Rajput polity based on the maxim of 'one clan, one state'. Its basic weakness was derived from the fact that the people living in such a state lived in complete isolation from the ruling clan which monopolised all power in the state to the exclusion of the people. The ideal of impersonal obedience to the state was yet to emerge and the people felt little or no concern to identify themselves with the ruling classes. The division of the country into separate clan monarchies and the

alienation of the ruling classes from the people at large are the two basic factors which explain the failure of the resistance move against Islam. Such other factors as the superiority of Muslim military tactics, or the superior generalship of the invading armies or the reduction of India's fighting strength owing to rigidification of caste-divisions are but secondary factors which made the defeat of the Indians possible but not inevitable.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

RISE AND GROWTH OF MUSLIM POWER

THE FOUNDATIONS of Muslim power in India, laid, over many years, at successive stages by the Arabs, the Ghaznivids and the Ghoris, culminated in the Delhi Sultanate. Muhammad Ghori (his full name was Shihabuddin or Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam) who conceived and conducted the campaigns in India did not live to enjoy the fruits of his victories. He died without leaving a male heir before his work was completed. Alauddin Muhammad of the Bamian branch of the family who succeeded him to the throne of Ghazni was soon after replaced by Muhammad bin Ghiyasuddin. The Indian conquests did not form a part of the ancestral kingdom and were placed, probably in accordance with the wish earlier expressed by Muhammad Ghori, under the authority of his most capable lieutenant Qutbuddin Aibak. Since Aibak and his successors for several generations till 1290 began their career as slaves, the period of the rule of the Sultans from 1206 to 1290 is known as the period of the rule of the Slave dynasty. The nomenclature is hardly accurate, since not one but three separate dynasties ruled during this period and only the three founders of these three dynasties had started life as slaves, but long before they came to seize royal power they had ceased to be slaves.

Qutbuddin and His Successor

On the death of his master (1206), Qutbuddin, supported by the army chiefs in India, proclaimed himself as the Sultan of Delhi. He also made simultaneous attempts to bring Ghazni under his control but failed. Ghazni remained a separate kingdom. This meant the emergence of India comprising the areas acquired by Muhammad Ghori and his lieutenants as a separate entity independent of Ghori authority. Qutbuddin had played a vital role under his chief in extending the authority of the Ghoris. He was left by his master 'untrammelled not only in his administration of the new conquests, but also in his discretion to extend them.' Qutb's achievements as monarch were, however, a mere shadow of his achievements as viceroy. Within the brief span of four years he was destined to reign and live, his work was naturally concerned with retention of what he had acquired rather than with expansion. Muslim chroni-

clers speak of his charities. Hasan-un-Nizami refers to his even-handed justice and solicitude for promoting the peace and prosperity of the realm. But this seems to be little more than conventional eulogy. His devotion to Islam is, however, attested by two mosques built by him at Delhi and Ajmere. The fact that Qutb could not sufficiently consolidate his position is borne out by the fact that his nominee and adopted son, *Aram Shah*, was driven out from the throne by the Turkish nobles of Delhi who replaced Aram by their own nominee Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1211 A.D.).

Iltutmish and His House

Iltutmish, like Qutb, was originally a slave who had risen to great prominence by his abilities. Prior to his accession he held, in succession, the fiefs of Gwalior and Baran and then became the Governor of Budaon. He married a daughter of Qutbuddin. His services in Muhammad Ghori's campaign against the Gakkars (1204 A.D.) won for him the exalted office of *Amir-ul-Umara*. On accession he found an explosive situation. Apart from the supporters of Aram Shah he had to deal with powerful rivals like Tajuddin Yildiz and Nasiruddin Qabacha. The former aimed at setting up an independent principality in the Punjab, while the latter advanced from Sind towards Lahore. Iltutmish faced the situation boldly and promptly. He defeated and made a captive of Yildiz and disarmed Qabacha who died shortly after. Thus freed of powerful enemies, the new Sultan strengthened his position and enhanced his prestige by obtaining from the Caliph Al Mustansir Billah a patent of investiture conferring on him the title of *Sultan-i-Azam*. He also acted vigorously in suppressing secessionist movements in Ranthambhor, Bengal and Gwalior. In 1234 he was strong enough to invade Malwa and take Bhilsa under occupation in 1236 A.D. Another notable achievement of Iltutmish was that he spared India the invasion of the powerful Mongol chief, Chinghiz Khan, who had appeared at the head of his hordes on the bank of the Indus in pursuit of Jalaluddin Mangabarni, then a fugitive from his kingdom of Khwarazm or Khiva. The Sultan acted with expediency in refusing asylum to the fugitive prince. In doing so he averted the enmity and invasion of the fierce Mongol hordes.

The quarter of a century of Iltutmish's reign (1211-1236 A.D.) constitutes an epoch of remarkable importance in the history of the Sultanate. Qutb was no doubt the first in the line of the Sultans

of Delhi, but to Iltutmish belongs the credit of being regarded as the true architect of Muslim power in India. Like Babur, destined later to be the founder of the Timurid line of kings, Qutb had no opportunity of consolidating his dominions. Iltutmish not only gave it stability but also extended its boundaries. He set up the structure of a strong state within the framework of a government of which the Sultan was the absolute head. Though constantly engaged in war he found time to extend patronage to arts and architecture. He caused the famous Qutb Minar, raised in memory of the Saint Khwaja Kutbuddin, to be completed. His piety and love of learning are attested to by Minhaj-us-Siraj who writes: 'Never has a sovereign so virtuous, kind-hearted and reverent towards the learned and the divines sat upon the throne.' He died in 1236 A.D.

An attractive and interesting figure among the Muslim sovereigns of India was *Raziyya*, who had been nominated by her father Iltutmish to succeed him, presumably as the fittest among his sons and daughters. Raziyya had nearly all the qualities of leadership but her fault in the eyes of the orthodox Amirs was that she was a woman. They placed on the throne, in defiance of the late Sultan's wish, a son of his, *Ruknuddin* by name. But he proved himself thoroughly incompetent. The newly set up kingdom was almost on the verge of disruption with open rebellions in Budaon, Multan, Jhansi, Lahore, Oudh and Bengal. In the circumstances Raziyya was brought in (1236 A.D.). She succeeded in restoring order and authority. Minhaj-us-Siraj writes: 'From Lakhnauti to Debal and Damrilah all the Maliks and Amirs manifested their obedience and submission.' She also suppressed an attempted rising organised by a heretical sect led by a Turk named Nuruddin. But Raziyya was not destined to rule in peace till the end. The favours she showed to an Abyssinian slave Jalaluddin Yaqut proved to be her undoing. A section of Turkish nobles under *Ikhtyaruddin Altuniya*, governor of Sarhind, rose in revolt and proclaimed her brother Muizuddin Bahram as Sultan in her place. In the midst of confusion Sultana Raziyya died at the hands of the rebel faction (1240 A.D.). Her sex was her offence in the eyes of the proud Turkish nobility.

For four years following the death of Raziyya there was no effective government, for both *Muizuddin Bahram* (1240-1242 A.D.) and his successor *Alauddin Masud Shah* (1242-1246 A.D.) were hopelessly unequal to the task ahead of them. To the evils of internal disorder were added the danger of Mongol invasion. In the midst of these

perils the nobles placed on the throne a new monarch (1246 A.D.). He was *Nasiruddin Mahmud*, a younger son of Iltutmish. He was a misfit for the throne at a time when strong leadership was needed. But he was fortunate in having as his minister Ghiyasuddin Balban, his own father-in-law. Balban was both wise and strong. For the next twenty years (1246-1266 A.D.) he was the power behind the throne. He suppressed all signs of rebellion, repelled foreign invaders and restored order and peace.

Balban and His Successors

On the death of Nasiruddin who had no male heir, Balban who had been the ruler in fact became ruler in law. He proved to be the second founder of the Sultanate. Like Qutbuddin and Iltutmish, Balban too started life as a slave and ended as a king. His long reign of twenty-one years (1266-1287 A.D.), like that of Iltutmish, is a remarkable epoch in the history of the Sultanate. On assuming the full responsibility of government, Balban's immediate task was to instal monarchy as the leading and the most effective part of the administrative machinery. The chief obstacle to the realisation of this aim was the overbearing ambition and pretensions of the Turkish military aristocracy. As Barani informs us, towards the closing years of Nasiruddin's reign 'fear of the governing power which is the main basis of all good government and the source of the glory and splendour of the state had departed from the hearts of all men, and the country had fallen into a wretched condition.' Balban was determined to set up 'fear of the governing power as the best remedy against the evil of baronial turbulence'. He exalted monarchical power till it became synonymous with despotism. His regulations regarding elaborate court ceremonials, the restrictions on the freedom of the nobility—even in the choice of dress, prohibition of wine-drinking and convivial gatherings—were all prompted by the desire to exalt monarchy to a height it had not reached before. He himself maintained a stiff demeanour and his sense of dignity did not permit him to speak to common people or even to laugh in public. He geared the state machinery to the suppressing of the coterie of Turkish nobility, known as the *Forty* whose pretensions had become a serious menace to the government. They practically monopolised all the offices in the gift of the state and virtually reduced the monarchy to a state of abject dependence on their favour and support. Balban took drastic steps and brought them under

effective control though he did not succeed in completely annihilating this privileged order. He organised an extensive espionage and through this agency kept himself informed of all happenings in the kingdom. He appointed secret news-writers at every level of administration and required them to transmit to him daily report of all important events and movements. He also reorganised the army by recruiting able young men and made the minister in charge of the army independent of the ministry of finance. He ordered a thorough enquiry into the military fiefs and resumed such lands as were held by old and infirm men and women who were unable to render military service. He did not abolish the older practice of assigning lands in lieu of military service, but took care to see that only such persons as were capable of rendering active service were given such assignments.

Having thus strengthened the position of the monarchy Balban directed his attention to the suppression of internal trouble and rebellions. He took stern measures and suppressed the robbers and disturbers of peace who had infested the neighbourhood of Delhi. He also put an end to the state of insecurity which had been prevailing for some time past in the Doab and in Oudh region. Under his instructions garrisons were posted at all strategic points, the forests were cleared and means of communication were set up. In Rajputana and Bundelkhand, where signs of similar disturbances made themselves manifest, the Sultan took harsh but prompt measures and restored order. A more serious problem, however, awaited him in Bengal where its governor, *Tughril Khan*, rose in revolt. The Sultan sent three armies in succession against the rebel governor but none of them succeeded. At last the Sultan personally led a large army, two lakhs strong, and reached Lakhnauti, the Bengal capital. Tughril, at the approach of the Delhi army, fled to East Bengal. Balban followed him there and captured the rebel leader. The Sultan thereafter returned to Lakhnauti where he ordered a general massacre of those suspected of participation in the rebellion. As Barani writes: 'On either side of the principal bazar, in a street more than two miles in length, a row of stakes was set up and the adherents of Tughril Khan were impaled upon them. None of the beholders had ever seen a spectacle so terrible, and many swooned with terror and disgust.' On suppression of the rebellion Balban returned to Delhi after entrusting the governorship of the troublesome province to his second son Bughra Khan.

Another serious trouble which Balban was called upon to deal with was the Mongol invasion. The Mongols had made the north-west regions of India their happy hunting ground. Lahore, Multan and Sind lay exposed to their undeclared but frequent incursions.

To deal with this danger Balban set up a ring of garrisons along the N. W. Frontier and manned them with sturdy Afghan troops. Sher Khan Sunqar who was appointed to the command of the frontier garrisons kept the Mongols at a distance. On his death in 1270 the command of the frontier garrisons was shared between the two sons of the Sultan. The elder of them, Prince Muhammad Khan, died while fighting against the Mongols. Balban's measures, however energetic, did not prove entirely successful. The Mongol menace persisted and the region beyond Lahore remained exposed to their inroads.

Balban showed great political foresight in eschewing schemes of territorial expansion through new conquests and confined his attention and energies to consolidating Muslim dominions in India. His government was no doubt despotic. It is also true that he did not introduce any administrative innovations. But he gave the kingdom what it needed most, viz. peace and security. In doing so he ensured its future stability. He exalted monarchy to a position which enabled the Sultan to have a firm grip on the working of the entire administrative machinery. Though engrossed in problems of war and administration, Balban was a patron of learning. He gave shelter to many learned men who had arrived from Central Asia as fugitives from the Mongol menace. The Sultan gave them liberal maintenance allowances and provided for them separate quarters in the capital.

For three years after Balban's death the throne of Delhi was occupied by his grandson, *Kaikobad* (1287-1290 A.D.). His incompetent and inglorious rule was brought to an end by Jalaluddin Firoz who founded a new line of rulers, viz. that of the Khaljis.

Jalaluddin Khalji

Jalaluddin Firoz who secured the crown by usurpation (1290 A.D.) was the founder of the Khalji dynasty. By race he was a Turk, though the Turkish nobility in India regarded him as an Afghan because his family had been living in Afghanistan for over two centuries. Firoz served under the Turkish Sultans of Delhi and rose to be the governor of the frontier province of Samana. At accession he was 70. His old age together with his innate good nature made many regard

him as a misfit for the throne in the days of trouble. Attempts were made to exploit the situation by Malik Chhajju, an ambitious nephew of Balban. Supported by the governor of Oudh and some old adherents of Balban, Malik Chhajju raised the standard of rebellion and marched towards the capital. The rebels were suppressed and the leaders including Chhajju were captured. The Sultan, however, by an act of misplaced clemency, ordered their release. He also conferred undeserved mercy on the robbers infesting the Doab, who on being captured by the royal officials were ordered to be deported by the Sultan to the province of Bengal. Further, he leniently dealt with the Mongols; instead of fighting them on the field he allowed 4,000 of them to settle in the neighbourhood of Delhi on their agreeing to embrace Islam. But in dealing with *Sidi Maula* and his partisans who plotted to murder the Sultan, he indulged in excessive cruelty by ordering the conspirators to be done to death by being trampled under the feet of elephants.

An important event of the reign of Jalaluddin Firoz was an expedition led by his nephew and son-in-law, Alauddin, governor of Kara, against Bhilsa and the southern kingdom of Devagiri. This was destined to lead to far-reaching consequences in the near future. Barani extols the virtues of the Sultan. Looking at his reign as a whole it would appear that 'his strange behaviour in dealing with the rebels did not redound to his credit as the master of an empire so recently won in teeth of so great an opposition. Never was a man more unsuited to wear the crown than the founder of the Khalji dynasty.'

The reign of Jalaluddin came to an end with his murder at the instigation of his ambitious nephew Alauddin (1290 A.D.). The accession of Alauddin marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Sultanate centring round the bid for imperialism.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE BID FOR IMPERIALISM: THE CLIMAX

THE PERIOD of nearly one hundred years from the accession of Qutbuddin to the murder of Jalaluddin Firoz is a period of dull monotony of baronial turbulence and wars of succession but for two brief interludes—the reigns of Iltutmish and Balban. They were the only two monarchs who made attempts at stabilising the position of the Sultanate. Even then they could think only in terms of consolidation; expansion of dominions they ruled out as impossible of realisation in the prevailing circumstances.

The first Muslim ruler of the pre-Mughal era to have conceived the project of making Delhi the seat of an imperial power was Alauddin Khalji.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316 A.D.): Alauddin came to the throne by an act of treacherous murder to which his uncle and predecessor Jalaluddin Firoz had become an unsuspecting victim. While serving as governor of Kara, the young Alauddin had given indication of his military ambition and territorial lust by leading expeditions against Malwa and the southern kingdom of Devagiri. These were but a prelude to his more ambitious designs which he set out to implement on succeeding to the throne.

His Early Difficulties and Rebellions: For some time immediately following his accession Alauddin was too busy in suppressing revolts. The first to rise in revolt were the legitimists who regarded him as a murderer and usurper. Their leader was *Ahmad Chap*, one of the most promising soldiers of his days. The widowed queen of Jalaluddin Firoz added to his difficulties by proclaiming her second son *Qadr Khan* as the Sultan of Delhi. The Hindu chiefs also began to exert themselves in an attempt to exploit the confusing situation for regaining their independence. To add to the uncertainty and confusion fresh hordes of Mongol invaders began to reappear on the scene of North-Western India.

Alauddin met the situation with characteristic boldness and promptitude. He marched on Delhi distributing on the way wealth and spoils he had collected from the Deccan and enlisted a large number of fortune-hunters in the ranks of his armed followers. Thus reinforced, he gave battle to his rival to the throne and forced him to seek safety in flight. Alauddin entered the capital in triumph, and

with the aid of his army, suppressed the partisans of Qadr Khan with a strong hand. Ahmad Chap and his associates were disarmed and treated with the utmost severity. The widow of Jalaluddin Firoz was thrown into prison and Ahmad Chap and Ulugh Khan the Mongol were blinded.

Once his position on the throne was secured, Alauddin formulated his scheme of government in which the exaltation of the Sultan's power figured most prominently. Like Balban he was convinced that the monarch's power should suffer no limitation. In his view the two curbs on the royal power were the nobility and the ulemas. He was determined to repudiate both these powers. His theory of kingship is best illustrated by the statement attributed to him: 'I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful; whatever I think is for the good of the state or suitable for the emergency, that I decree; and as for what may happen to me on the day of Judgement, that I know not.' His theory was thus more outspoken than that of Balban. Unlike Balban, he did not remain content with the suppression of the nobility; he went a step further and curbed the pretensions of the religious divines. Nor did he think it necessary, like Iltutmish, to seek investitute from the Caliph, though he described himself as a *Yamin-ul-Khilafat Nasiri Amir-ul-Muminin* or a deputy of the Caliph.

Even after the first symptoms of rebellion were apparently brought under control and the Sultan felt strong enough to launch on a career of conquests he discovered that rebellion had only been scotched and not killed. The first to embarrass him while he was engaged in war in Gujarat, were the Mongols who, on embracing Islam, had been permitted by his predecessor to settle in the vicinity of Delhi. These new Mussalmans who had joined the Gujarat campaigns were dissatisfied with the distribution of spoils and rose in mutiny. The Sultan, however, suppressed the mutineers ruthlessly, putting even their wives and children to death. A second rebellion followed. Its instigator was his nephew *Akat Khan*. He made a sudden and unprovoked attack on the Sultan while he was out on a hunting expedition. Akat Khan took the Sultan to be dead. He was, however, mistaken, for Alauddin soon recovered and turned the tables on the rebels by putting them to death with their leader. A more serious rebellion was staged by his two near relatives—the two sons of his sister in Budaun and Oudh—while the Sultan was engaged in the siege of Ranthambhor. But this too was foiled by the timely intervention of the Sultan's officials. A fourth rebellion broke out in

Delhi. Its instigator was a disaffected officer named *Hazi Maula*, who went to the extent of proclaiming a nominee of his as the Sultan. But this rebellion, too, like the preceding ones, was suppressed before it could take on serious dimensions.

Administrative Measures: The fact of several rebellions occurring at short intervals, one after the other, convinced the Sultan of the need for adopting preventive measures of a radical character. He analysed the situation and persuaded himself into believing that rebellion had thrived because of the inadequacy of the espionage staff, excessive use of liquor, free social intercourse among the nobility and possession of excessive wealth. Accordingly, Alauddin promulgated a series of four ordinances. These authorised confiscation of all religious endowments, prohibited free gift of lands, reorganised the espionage by placing news-writers and spies in the houses of dignitaries and in all offices, put a ban on the general use of liquor and forbade social gatherings and intermarriages among the nobility except when permitted by the Sultan. He adopted a series of stern measures specially designed to curb the Hindus. The privileges enjoyed by the Hindus serving in the revenue department were withdrawn and the revenue was enhanced to the abnormal rate of one-half of the total produce. As a result of these stringent measures the Hindus who owned the major share of the lands were hit hard. As Sir Wolseley Haig writes: 'Hindus throughout the kingdom were reduced to one dead level of poverty and misery, or if there were one class more to be pitied than another, it was that which had formerly enjoyed the most esteem, the hereditary assessors and collectors of the revenue.' The contemporary historian Barani admits that Alauddin's desire was to reduce the Hindus, in particular, to a state of wanton poverty. This is borne out by his statement: 'Sultan Alauddin demanded from learned men rules and regulations so that the Hindu should be ground down and property and possessions, which are the causes of disaffection and rebellion, should not remain in his house.' It is also clear from Barani's statement that the object of the Sultan was fulfilled in that 'the *Chaudharis* (headmen of the Parganas), *Khuts* (zamindars) and *Muquddams* (headmen of the villages) were not able to ride on horseback, to find weapons, to get fine clothes, or to indulge in betel.' Besides increasing the land revenue Alauddin also introduced two new taxes—a house-tax and a tax on all milch cows.

Consistently with his theory of absolute kingship, Alauddin had to provide himself with a strong army on whose support and strength

lay the whole basis of his government. The army accordingly demanded much of his attention. He was the first among the Muslim rulers of India to lay the nucleus of a permanent standing army. He took steps to recruit able and promising young men to the army and arranged for cash payment of their salary from the imperial treasury. They were supplied with horses, arms and other equipment at the expense of the state. To eliminate corruption and encourage discipline he caused a descriptive roll, giving full particulars of individual soldiers, to be prepared and kept with the army minister. With the same end in view he enforced the system of branding horses. We do not have exact figures showing the strength of his army. Wassaf merely records that the central army consisted of 4,75,000 cavalrymen, but it is evident that no Sultan before his time possessed such a large army as Alauddin had at his disposal.

The maintenance of a large army and increasing expenses incurred in connection with his numerous expeditions compelled the Sultan to initiate experiments aimed at regulation of the market price of essential commodities, since the resources of the state would not permit any further raising of revenue. To enable the soldiers to live comfortably even on moderately low salaries, he caused the maximum prices to be fixed for essential articles like food grain, cloth, vegetables, bread, shoes, etc. All dealers in these commodities were required to register their names with the office of the Inspector-General of markets. To guard against scarcity, in case of failure of crops, he caused grain to be stored in state granaries. Hoarding was strictly forbidden. The Sultan kept the strictest possible vigilance so that the regulations were obeyed and any violation was severely dealt with. These regulations of market rates have been regarded by some historians as 'marvels of mediaeval statesmanship'. But the economic soundness of those measures is not above dispute. The narrow margin allowed to the producer discouraged private initiative, and the peasant-producers in particular, burdened with a heavy load of taxation, found their lives miserable.

The market regulations were, in all probability, enforced in the capital city and its neighbourhood. These were not in force throughout the empire, for even if the Sultan was desirous of doing it (for which there is no evidence) he could not have enforced them for lack of proper and adequate agencies for the same.

Alauddin's Conquests: Ziauddin Barani informs us that Alauddin Khalji was inordinately ambitious. 'Vast desires and great aims far

beyond him,' he writes, 'formed their germs in his brain and he entertained fancies which had never occurred to any king before him. In his exaltation, ignorance and folly he quite lost his head, forming the most impossible schemes and nourishing the most extravagant desires.' One such desire was to found a new religion; another was to become a second Alexander. He was persuaded to refrain from the first, but the second did not cease to find favour with him as is evidenced by his coins with the legend of Second Alexander.

Even before accession to the throne Alauddin had given vent to his ambitious warlike designs by his campaigns led against Malwa and Devagiri. These were preludes to vaster schemes of conquest he undertook on becoming the Sultan. Immediately after the suppression of conspiracies and rebellions within, the Sultan gave effect to his schemes of wide conquest. His first victim was *Gujarat*, then under the rule of the Baghelas. In 1299 the Khalji armies, led by Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan, marched on the capital city of Anhilwara and took it under occupation. The Baghela king Rai Karan took to flight. His wife Kamaladevi fell into the hands of the invaders.

Alauddin's next expedition was directed against the fortress of *Ranthambhor*, then under the Chauhan prince Hamira Deva. He had offended the Sultan by offering shelter to some of the New Musalmans who had rebelled and then had taken to flight. Another reason which prompted the Sultan to undertake this expedition was that the fortress had submitted to the Sultanate in the days of Iltutmish, but had of late chosen to proclaim independence. The first attempt of the Khalji armies was foiled by the Rajputs. The Sultan thereupon personally took charge of the expedition. Even then he was unable to make much headway. Later he took recourse to bribery by which he won over Ranmal, the prime minister. It worked better. The fort was laid under investment. There was such acute shortage of provisions within the fort that the inhabitants suffered unbearable hardship. The women burnt themselves to death according to the custom of *Jauhar*. Hamira and his men rushed on the enemies and sacrificed their lives. Ranthambhor was finally annexed to the Sultanate (1301 A.D.).

Two years later Alauddin led his third great expedition against *Chitor*, the famous capital of the Guhilot Rajputs of Mewar. Col. Tod, relying on later traditions, has ascribed this venture of the Sultan to his desire to secure Padmini, the peerless queen of Rana Ratan Sinha (and not of Rana Bhima Sinha, as Tod mistakenly states).

This, however, appears to be a mere conjecture. The real motive of the expedition was the determination of the Sultan to round off his conquests in Northern India before he could launch his attacks south of the Vindhyas. Another powerful factor was the desire to link up the newly conquered western region of Gujarat with the rest of Northern India through the occupation of the strategic fortress of Chitor. The Khalji armies laid the fort under investment, the Rajputs offering valiant resistance as best as they could. But they were unable to withstand the numerically superior forces of the enemy for more than five months, at the end of which they were forced to submit. The ladies, including Padmini, offered themselves to the flames and courted heroic deaths. The Sultan ordered a general massacre in course of which 30,000 Rajputs, according to the estimation of Amir Khasru, lost their lives. The Sultan returned to Delhi, leaving the fort under the charge of his eldest son, *Khizr Khan*. But the Khaljis could not hold the historic fortress for long and it reasserted its independence within a few years.

In 1305 came the turn of *Malwa*. Under orders of the Sultan the large army under Ain-ul-Mulk-Multani marched against the Hindu kingdom. All attempts at resistance were overcome and the Delhi army occupied, in succession, the cities of Ujjain, Mandu, Dhar and Chanderi. Alauddin constituted the conquered areas into a province under the Khalji empire and placed it under the charge of a Muslim governor. Hindu rule in Malwa thus came to an end after nearly three and a half centuries of existence under the Paramaras.

In 1308 Alauddin completed his scheme of subjugation with the conquest of Siwana and Jalor, both in Marwar. An inscription dated 1301 suggests that Jodhpur too rendered allegiance to his imperial authority. According to Col. Tod, Bundi, Mandor and Tonk also rendered allegiance to the authority of the Khalji emperor.

The Deccan Conquests: Alauddin was the first among the Muslim rulers of India to entertain and implement a plan for the conquest of kingdoms situated beyond the Vindhyas. He had the political astuteness to realise that the South Indian states were too remote to be brought under effective control, even if conquered. He, therefore, adopted, with regard to trans-Vindhyan India, a policy different from the one he had followed in regard to Northern India. Here he directly annexed the territories he had conquered but in the south he was content to impose upon the vanquished princes the obligation to accept him as Suzerain and send him regular tribute.

In 1303 Alauddin sent his army to the Deccan for the purpose of invading the Kakatiya kingdom of *Warangal*. His troops marched under the command of Chhajju through Bengal and Orissa and reached Warangal. But in the battle that followed they were beaten by the Kakatiya ruler, Prataparudra Deva and compelled to withdraw in great confusion.

In 1306-7 the command of the army sent againt the Deccan for the second time after his accession was entrusted to *Kafur* who had been captured years ago in course of campagins against the Baghelas. He had proved himself a loyal and promising soldier. The Sultan appointed him as *Naib* or deputy of the state and placed him in charge of operations against Ramachandra, the Yadava king of *Devagiri*. He had been in default with the tribute due from him for three successive years. He had also given further provocation by offering asylum to Rai Karan, the fugitive ex-king of Gujarat. Yet another motive of the Sultan in ordering this expedition was the desire to oblige Kamaladevi, the former queen of Gujarat, who had found a place in the Sultan's harem. She insisted that her daughter Devaladevi who had been living with her father, the former king of Gujarat, should be brought to Delhi. Rai Karan who had set up a small principality in Baglana felt alarmed at the news of Kafur's approach. To prevent the forcible seizure of his daughter, Karan arranged a marriage of Devaladevi with Sankara, the crown prince of Devagiri. But as the princess was being escorted to the Yadava capital the Muslim troops intercepted and forcibly carried her off. She was sent to Delhi where she was given in marriage to Prince Khizr Khan. Rai Karan suffered reverses at the hands of the Khalji troops led by the governor of Malwa, Alap Khan, and took to flight.

In the meantime Kafur marched towards Devagiri. Ramachandra found that resistance in the face of vastly superior forces would be of no avail and he submitted. He visited Delhi and made up with the Sultan by making over to him enormous presents in cash and kind. The Sultan who had no desire to directly annex the remote kingdom accepted the submission and reinstated him as a vassal prince on promise of payment of a regular tribute to the imperial treasury.

Alauddin was not reconciled to the failure of his earlier attempt to force the Kakatiya king to submit to his authority in 1303. Accordingly in 1308 he directed Kafur to renew the invasion of this

southern kingdom. The Khalji army made a sudden attack on the walls of the capital city of Warangal. The attempt succeeded and the Kakatiya king, Prataparudra II, taken by surprise, was forced to submit after heavy losses. He concluded terms on promise of payment of annual tributes, besides an indemnity of 300 elephants, 7,000 horses and a huge amount of wealth in cash and jewellery.

In 1310 came the turn of the Hoysala kingdom of *Dvarasamudra* to feel the impact of Khalji aggression. Under orders of the Sultan a large army marched towards the southern kingdom under the command of Malik Kafur. While on the way to Dvarasamudra Kafur took the precaution of leaving a garrison at Jalna on the Godavari, situated within the kingdom of Devagiri, since he was not sure about the loyalty of the new Yadava king Sankaradeva who had succeeded his father Ramachandradeva to the throne. From Devagiri Kafur and his men covered the distance with remarkable speed within twelve days and reached Dvarasamudra before the kingdom could take proper measures of defence. Vira Ballala, taken by complete surprise, had to suffer defeat. The Hoysala capital of Dvarasamudra fell before the invaders. The vanquished king was, however, allowed to retain the throne on promise of payment of a tribute, besides enormous war indemnity which is believed to have included a jewel, described by Amir Khasru as 'unparalleled in the whole world' and identified by some with the Kohinoor, the famous diamond of Babur.

The victorious Naib Kafur continued his march further south and appeared before the *Pandya* kingdom (1310-1311 A.D.) which was passing through a phase of uncertainty and confusion owing to a war of succession between the two brothers, Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya, each of whom contended for the throne. Sundara Pandya sought the intervention of Sultan Alauddin and it was in response to his appeal that Kafur had appeared on the scene. Vira Pandya, the reigning monarch, at first offered some resistance which was not lacking in vigour but in the end he could not dislodge the enemies who before long took possession of the capital city of Madura. The Muslim army plundered the city collecting enormous booties. Kafur's campaigns against the Pandya kingdom, attended with successive plunders, were not, however, a success, judged from the military or diplomatic results achieved thereby. He failed to secure the submission of the Pandya kingdom. The raid, as such, was more spectacular than effective.

Kafur's movements on leaving Madura are not known for certain. The authenticity of the claim of Firishta that Kafur reached Rameswaram has been doubted by several historians on the ground that neither Barani nor Isami refers to it. They give the impression that the Naib started on his return journey from Madura, reaching Delhi after a journey of five months in October 1311 A.D. What is certain is that Kafur returned laden with such enormous booties as no one is known to have brought to Delhi before. The booties are said to have included '312 elephants, 20,000 horses and 2,750 pounds of gold equal in value to ten crores of *Tankas*'.

Kafur's last campaign in the Deccan was directed against the kingdom of Devagiri in 1313. This was in consequence of the failure of Sankaradeva to pay the promised tribute in regular instalments. The campaign ended in the defeat and death of Sankaradeva and the reduction of his kingdom into a province under the Sultanate. Kafur followed up his success by successive occupation of Gulbarga, the Raichur Doab between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers, and the sea ports of Dabhol and Chaul.

Thus by the end of 1313 Khalji imperialism stood at its height with Alauddin's authority acknowledged over large portions of North and South India, such as no other Muslim ruler before him had ruled over.

Alauddin and the Mongols: Much of Alauddin's attention was taken up with the Mongols who had been a constant threat to India's security on the north-west for some time past. But however serious the danger, unlike Balban, Alauddin could afford to combine schemes of conquest with combative measures against the invaders from Central Asia. He was fortunate in the generals whom he had entrusted with the war against the Mongols. Zafar Khan met the first three challenges boldly and repulsed the Mongols in 1296, 1297 and again in 1299, though in the last encounter he lost his life. In 1303 another Mongol army 1,20,000 strong, led by Targhi Khan, reappeared on the scene. Alauddin, then engaged in the siege of Chitor, hastened back to Delhi but was unable to save the capital and its vicinity from the Mongol raids. Fortunately for the Sultan the enemies made a retreat as suddenly as they had appeared, possibly because they had discovered that they were not well acquainted with the art of siege operations. The last two expeditions, in course of which the Mongols reached Delhi unopposed, brought home to the Sultan the urgency of strengthening the advance

forts. He not only repaired the old forts but also set up new garrisons at strategic points in the Punjab, Multan and Sind. He also entrusted the responsibility of guarding the frontier to a special unit of the army. These measures no doubt improved the position on the frontier though they could not prevent the reappearance of the Mongols for the fourth time under the command of Ali Beg, a descendant of Chinghiz Khan. The Mongols were intercepted on their way back from the Punjab and Amroha by Malik Kafur and Ghazi Malik who succeeded in inflicting on them heavy losses. A large number of them were taken prisoners. Another invasion launched in 1306 was similarly foiled by the efforts of Ghazi Malik who had been appointed as governor of the Punjab. The last invasion took place in 1307-8. It was intercepted at an early stage before it could take on serious proportions. For the remaining years of his reign the Mongols did not repeat their raids.

Patronage of Arts and Literature: Though a tyrant and war-monger Alauddin was a lover of architecture. He caused a new city called *Siri* to be built, adorned with numerous splendid edifices. He added to the Qutb group several architectural objects of which the most outstanding was the *Alai Darwaza*, regarded by competent critics as 'the most beautiful and perfect specimen of early Turkish architecture'. He also began the construction of a new minar which was intended to surpass the grandeur of the older Qutb Minar. The Sultan was not a learned man himself; he possessed only some knowledge of the Persian language acquired later in life. But he had great respect for learned men to whom he extended liberal patronage. The most celebrated among these men of learning patronised by him was Amir Khasru and Amir Hasan of Delhi.

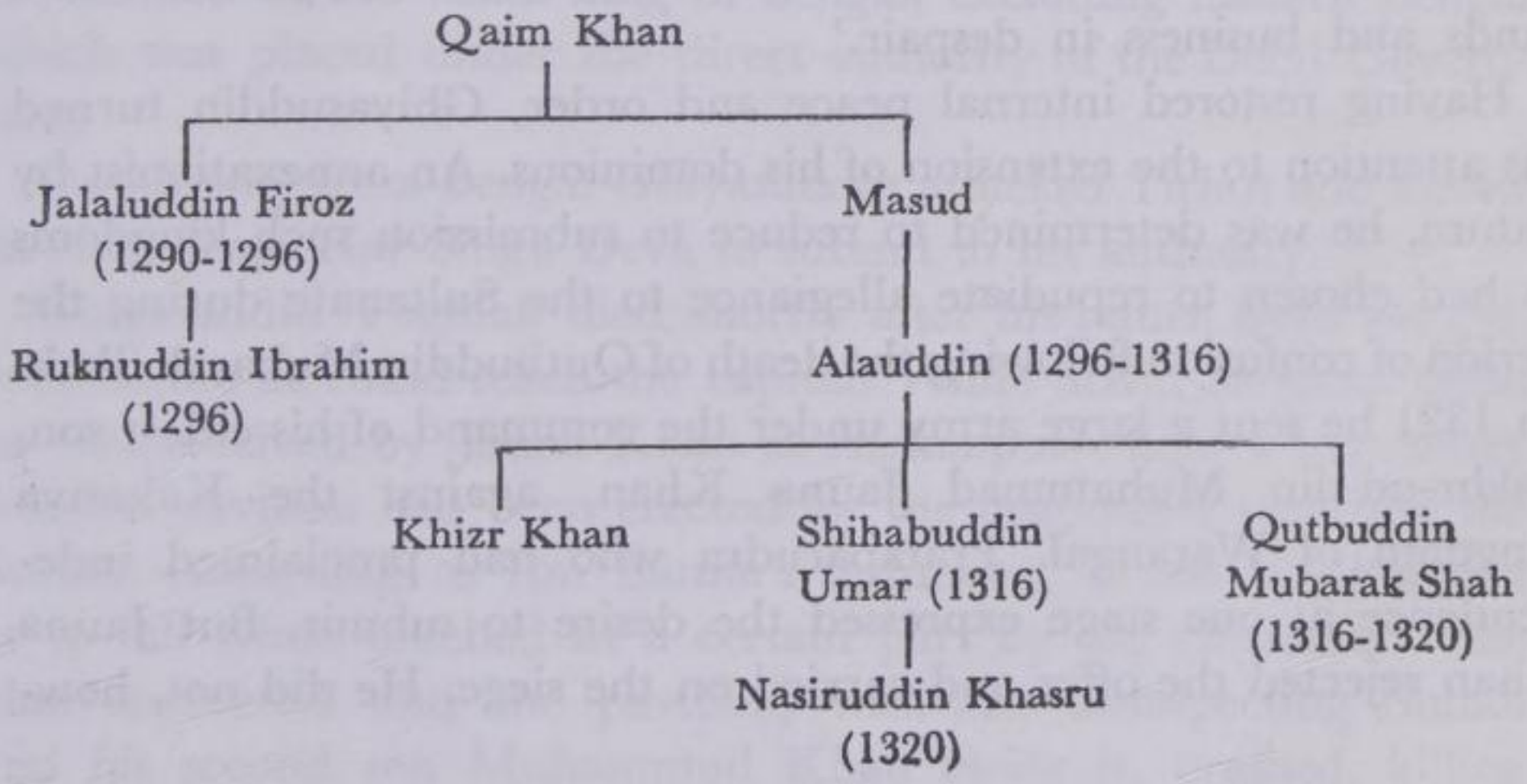
Last Days of Alauddin: The last days of Alauddin were a time of trouble and confusion. The mainstay of the government was the Sultan himself who, because of failing health, could no longer control and direct its policy and activities. He became more and more dependent on Naib Kafur who exploited the situation by poisoning the Sultan's mind against his queen and Prince Khizr Khan. Conspiracies and murders polluted the court and the breakdown of the government machinery became increasingly manifest. This inevitably led to rebellions and mutiny. The army in Gujarat rose in mutiny while the rulers of Chitor and Devagiri lost no time in proclaiming their independence. In the midst of this confusion Alauddin breathed his last (1316 A.D.).

Alauddin—An Estimate: Ibn Batuta, the Moorish traveller, who visited India in the days of Muhammad bin Tughlak speaks of Alauddin Khalji as 'one of the best Sultans'. This is a surprising verdict, since neither the manner in which he came to the throne nor the manner in which he conducted himself as a ruler agrees with the concept of a good ruler, not to speak of the best one. Ziauddin Barani, on the other hand, in referring to his acts of cruelty, says that 'he shed more innocent blood than ever Pharaoh was guilty of.' This approximates to truth, for by nature Alauddin was a cruel and implacable despot. The measures adopted by him to suppress the majority community, viz. the Hindus, were definitely oppressive. But he had the qualities of a born military leader. He showed unusual boldness and originality in repudiating the authority of the Ulemas in the affairs of the state. As an administrator he was unsparing in his personal efforts to keep the strictest control over the working of the governmental machinery. He built up for the first time in Muslim India the nucleus of a standing army. His reforms of the revenue system, especially in regard to the resumption of lands formerly held by persons who were of little or no service to the state, were commendable. His attempt at regulation of the market was a bold, though perhaps not a sound, economic experiment. His system had all the limitations inevitable in despotism. But it can hardly be denied that he brought unusual vigour to bear upon the working of the government. To him belongs the credit of founding the first Muslim Empire in India, embracing the largest territories both north and south of the Vindhyas, to be ruled over by a Muslim sovereign. 'The reign of Alauddin,' it has been rightly claimed, 'marks the highest point of the Sultanate's political power both in terms of the area of the kingdom and the power of the Sultan." It is true that his hold on South India was much less effective than in the North. But this was inevitable in a vast country like India in an age when the means of communication were slow. Alauddin seems to have been well aware of it and he showed great political astuteness in refraining from outright annexation of the Deccan kingdoms.

End of Khalji Rule: The Khalji bid for imperialism proved to be short-lived. Disintegration had set in even during the last days of Alauddin. His successor *Shihabuddin Umar*, a minor barely 6 years old, was king only in name; the real authority was held by Naib Kafur who acted as regent to the minor Sultan. Kafur was not, however, destined

to enjoy his power in peace. He was murdered at the instigation of *Mubarak Shah*, the third son of Alauddin, who first became regent for the boy-king and then himself became the Sultan (April 1316) with the title of *Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah.* He repealed some of the harsh measures of Alauddin in an attempt to win the good will of the amirs, but he was too addicted to pleasures to take any initiative or sustained interest in formulating policy or in conducting the government. He resigned his authority in favour of an upstart, a low-caste Hindu who had become a convert to Islam. This favourite, *Khasru* by name, acted as prime minister. He took steps for suppressing the rebellion in Gujarat. The Sultan himself marched against Devagiri, brought it back under his authority and converted it into a regular province under the Sultanate. But Mubarak's success was more apparent than real. The Muslim governor of Devagiri revolted. His example was followed by his counterpart in Gujarat. To add to the confusion Khasru, in a bid for securing the throne for himself, entered into a conspiracy which ended in the murder of Mubarak Shah. He, thereupon, proclaimed himself the new Sultan (April 1320). But his low origin and treacherous conduct alienated the Turkish aristocracy. *Ghazi Malik*, the warden of the marches in the north, headed an open revolt, marched on Delhi and seized the crown after defeating Khasru in a battle fought on September 5, 1320. With the accession of Ghazi Malik with the title of Ghiyasuddin Tughlak, the rule of the Khaljis was replaced by that of the Tughlaks.

Genealogical Table of the Khalji Dynasty



The Tughlakshahi Rule

The founder of the Tughlakshahi rule, Ghazi Malik, who assumed the title of *Ghiyasuddin Tughlak* was, by race, a *Qarauna* Turk. His father, according to Firishta's account, was a Turki slave of Balban and his mother was a Jat woman of the Punjab. His abilities attracted the notice of Alauddin Khalji who ultimately appointed him to the responsible post of the warden of the marches in the north.

At accession Ghiyasuddin was a man well advanced in years. He followed a policy of conciliation and succeeded in winning the support and good will of the officials and the nobles. He showed his capabilities as an administrator. He undid the evils from which the government and the people suffered since the last days of Alauddin Khalji. He took steps to improve the agricultural resources by promoting irrigation and reduced the amount of revenue and taxation with which the people had been burdened ever since the days of Alauddin Khalji. He made arrangements for the proper collection of revenue and provided for regular audit of state income and expenditure. He also caused considerable improvement in the working of the police and postal departments. Under his orders many works of public utility like roads, bridges and canals were executed. He enforced strict discipline in the army and saw that justice was administered impartially as far as practicable. But however laudable his efforts in these directions were, Ghiyasuddin did not make any attempt to remove the disabilities and hardships imposed on the Hindus since the days of Alauddin Khalji. As Ziauddin Barani writes, he directed that 'there should be left only so much to the Hindus that neither, on the one hand, should they become arrogant on account of their wealth, nor, on the other, should they desert their lands and business in despair.'

Having restored internal peace and order, Ghiyasuddin turned his attention to the extension of his dominions. An annexationist by nature, he was determined to reduce to submission such kingdoms as had chosen to repudiate allegiance to the Sultanate during the period of confusion following the death of Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah. In 1321 he sent a large army under the command of his eldest son, Fakhr-ud-din Muhammad Jauna Khan, against the Kakatiya kingdom of Warangal. Prataparudra who had proclaimed independence at one stage expressed the desire to submit. But Jauna Khan rejected the offer and carried on the siege. He did not, how-

ever, continue the siege till the end, for he had received the news (which was a baseless rumour) that Ghiyasuddin was dead and hastened back towards Delhi after raising the siege.

The prince, however, returned two years later (1323) to renew the siege and compelled Prataparudradeva to surrender. His defeat meant the end of the rule of the Kakatiyas. Warangal, renamed as Sultanpur, according to Barani, was reduced to the status of a province under the Sultanate. This is, however, not in accord with the evidence of an inscription dated 1326 A.D. which shows that Prataparudradeva continued to rule over Guntur region either as a subordinate ruler, or else he probably had reasserted independence since his submission three years ago.

The Sultan was also called upon to intervene in the affairs of Bengal which was then the battle-ground for rival claimants. After the death of Kaikaus, the son of Bughra Khan, the government of Bengal was seized by a former slave who assumed the title of *Shamsuddin Firoz Shah*. He ruled till 1322. His successor was his son *Shihabuddin* who took control of the capital city of Lakhnauti. But his two brothers *Nasiruddin* and *Ghiyasuddin* contested his title. The latter had his seat of power in Sonargaon from where he marched upon Lakhnauti and took it under occupation after driving out Shihabuddin. These disturbances induced the Sultan to start for Bengal in 1324. On his way *Nasiruddin*, one of the contenders for power and who had in the meantime probably seized Lakhnauti from his brother, met the Sultan. Ghiyasuddin who had still earlier added Lakhnauti to Sonargaon was engaged in battle by the Sultan's troops, defeated and taken prisoner. Nasiruddin was thereupon proclaimed as the vassal king of Bengal, excluding Eastern Bengal which was placed under the direct authority of the Delhi Government.

On his way from Bengal Ghiyasuddin attacked Tirhut and forced its ruler Raja Har Singh Deva to submit to his authority.

Ghiyasuddin Tughlak died shortly after his return from Bengal, even before he could reach the capital. While about to enter Delhi he was received by Jauna Khan at Afghanpur where a temporary wooden pavilion had been erected for the purpose of receiving the Sultan. According to Ibn Batuta's testimony, it was 'so designed as to fall when touched in a certain part by the elephants'. The plan succeeded and the pavilion, with the unsuspecting Sultan and his second son Muhammud Khan inside it, crashed, killing

both. On the basis of the account given by the Moorish traveller, it has been supposed that the murder was deliberately planned by the heir-apparent in his anxiety to succeed to the throne. Barani, however, refers to the tragic incident in a vague way from which it is possible to infer that the pavilion was accidentally struck by lightning and its destruction was not the outcome of any pre-conceived move.

Ghiyasuddin was a lover of architecture. Early in his reign he founded a new palace fort known as *Tughlakabad*. Ibn Batuta informs us that 'here were Tughlak's treasures and palaces, and the great palace which he had built of gilded bricks, which, when the Sun arose, shone so dazzlingly that none could gaze steadily upon it. There he laid up great treasures, and had molten gold poured into it so that it became one solid mass.'

Muhammad bin Tughlak

Jauna Khan whose relations with his father had been under strain during the last few months of Ghiyasuddin's life, and who is even suspected of having instigated his murder, came to the throne in 1325 A.D. with the title of Muhammad Shah. He is better known as Muhammad bin Tughlak. His reign (1325-1351 A.D.) is one of the most striking epochs in the history of the Sultanate, for it saw the climax of the territorial expansion of the empire as well as the beginning of its end.

An understanding of the strange phenomenon of the fall of the empire following close upon its rise to its height is possible largely in the context of the Sultan's character and personality. He was endowed with a versatile genius—deeply interested in the pursuit of such widely differing arts and sciences as logic, philosophy, astronomy and mathematics, well acquainted with the Persian classics and himself a composer of verses of considerable literary merit in Persian and Arabic, an excellent calligraphist, a lover of music and a patron of letters and arts. He possessed an extraordinary memory and an insatiable thirst for knowledge. In private life he was a devout Muslim, regular in his prayers and charitable in disposition. No wonder then that Barani, though by no means well disposed towards the Sultan, described him as 'one of the wonders of the creation'.

This is, however, only one side of his personality which was, to all purposes, a split one. As Elphinstone writes: 'The whole of these splendid talents and accomplishments were given to him in

vain; they were accompanied by a perversion of judgement, which, after every allowance for the intoxication of absolute power, leaves us in doubt whether he was not affected by some degree of insanity.' Insanity, unless it is synonymous with lack of balance, is perhaps too strong a term to be used in this context and many would be disinclined to accept Elphinstone's verdict. But there can be little doubt that the Sultan was lamentably lacking in practical judgement and common sense. His love of novelty often led him to new experiments which proved to be unbearably costly burdens on the state's resources and even impaired its stability. His cruelty is also beyond dispute, though the charge of blood-thirstiness is undeserved. It is unfortunate that Barani wrote his account of Muhammad bin Tughlak's policy and work with a certain amount of bias. An excellent historian otherwise, Barani could never forgive the Sultan for his anti-clerical views, and he even charged the Sultan with atheism which cannot, however, be substantiated. Later historians have allowed themselves to be influenced by Barani's views and on this account they have failed to appraise properly the character and actions of this extraordinary personality—a curious mixture of opposites. Some of his actions were of an unconventional nature; a few even bordered on the fantastic, but he was not what Barani makes him out to be. His policy and actions no doubt undermined the stability of the empire but it is well to remember that the final end of the Sultanate did not come till a century and three-quarters had elapsed after the death of this controversial ruler.

Domestic History: Immediately on accession Muhammad bin Tughlak was not called upon to meet any challenge against his authority and all classes in the state seemed to have accepted the change on the throne as normal. But symptoms of disaffection soon made themselves manifest. A cousin of the new Sultan, *Baha-ud-din Gurshasp*, who held the fief of Sagar near Gulbarga, was the first to rise in defiance of his authority (1326-27). The Sultan met the situation firmly and promptly, suppressed the rebellion and brought the offender in captivity to Delhi where he was ordered to be flayed alive. Another rebellion, a minor one, was headed by a Hindu chief of *Kondhana* (near Poona) which too was suppressed after a successful siege by the Sultan's forces. A third rebellion followed. Its instigator was *Bahram Aiba* who held the fiefs of Multan, Uch and Sind. The Sultan, then away in Devagiri, lost no time in

marching to Multan. Here he met the rebel leader, overpowered him and his followers and sentenced him to die.

One of the actions for which Barani questions the wisdom of the Sultan was the burden of increased taxation he had imposed on the inhabitants of the Doab. The taxes were increased to the extent of ten to twenty times. Barani speaks in detail of the sufferings caused to the people in consequence of rigorous exaction of taxes, regardless of the fact that a famine had in the meantime broken out there. As a result the rich were reduced to poverty, lands were ruined and cultivation suffered. Many took shelter in the forests and vast areas were depopulated. As the historian writes: 'The decline of cultivation, the ruin of the ryots, the failure of the convoys and corn from distant provinces caused a famine in Delhi and its neighbourhood and the country of the Doab.... The glory of Muhammad's empire began to decline from this time.' It should, however, be stated in fairness to the Sultan that he arranged for advancing loans to the peasantry and caused irrigation wells to be dug.

The Sultan's next move was attended with even more disastrous consequences. He ordered the transfer of the capital from Delhi to Devagiri which had been renamed as *Daulatabad*. His obvious motive was to ensure security by shifting the capital from Delhi which lay within the sweep of Mongol inroads to a place which was situated in the centre of the empire out of the reach of the Mongols and was capable of maintaining contact with the outlying provinces much more effectively than the old capital. Ibn Batuta, however, gives the incredible version that the Sultan's order regarding the transfer of capital was prompted by his desire to punish the residents of Delhi who had incurred his displeasure by circulating anonymous publications full of abuses and caricatures of the Sultan.

The Sultan did not remain content only with ordering the court and officers to report at the new capital. He insisted on the transfer *en masse* of the Delhi population. This caused untold miseries. The officers took recourse to intimidation and carried out the order so ruthlessly that not a soul could be seen in the deserted city. Ibn Batuta, probably relying on a bazar gossip, informs us that a cripple and a blind man were the only persons to be seen, and on their expressing unwillingness or inability to leave Delhi, the cripple was put to death and the blind man was ordered to be dragged all the way to the new capital with the result that only one of his legs reached the destination. It is true that the Sultan made excellent

arrangements for the comfort of the travellers all along the seven hundred mile long route, providing them with free food and shelter. But the entire scheme proved to be a costly bungling. Daulatabad was not big enough to accommodate the entire body of immigrants. Nor was the new capital an ideal site for either fighting the Mongols or keeping firm grip on troublesome provinces like Bengal. The Muslims who had long been accustomed to living in Delhi with its predominantly Muslim character could not reconcile themselves to the changed situation in which they were required to live side by side with the Hindus in a predominantly Hindu area like Daulatabad. The Sultan realised that his order was an act of supreme folly and he lost no time in rescinding it. The people were ordered back to the old capital. Daulatabad remained, as Lane-Poole observes, 'a monument of misdirected energy'.

Muhammad bin Tughlak, described as 'a prince of moneyers,' reformed the existing coinage and issued various new types of coins noted alike for their design and execution. But he embarked on a new experiment in coinage which proved to be a costly blunder and involved the state in irreparable financial losses. This was the issue of a token currency (1329-1330 A.D.). According to Barani's account, in order to meet the demands of ever-increasing military expenses, the Sultan ordered the issue of copper and brass tokens to be treated as legal tender in all monetary transactions like gold and silver coins. There was nothing inherently absurd about the experiment. Token currency was known to have been in circulation in China and Persia since the thirteenth century. The need for token currency was probably felt by the Sultan in view of the general scarcity of silver throughout Asia in the fourteenth century. But the Sultan neglected to take precautionary measures against counterfeit coins with which the market became overflooded. Barani informs us that the house of every Hindu was turned into an unauthorised mint. Gold and silver were carefully hoarded and all dues payable to the state were paid in forged coins. This not only involved the government in heavy losses but also retarded import as the foreign merchants refused to accept token coins. The Sultan saw the unwisdom of his action and withdrew the copper and brass coins after the experiment had resulted in tremendous losses to the state and had yielded enormous profit to unscrupulous hoarders and forgers.

Like Alauddin Khalji, Muhammad bin Tughlak was determined

to eliminate the authority and control of the Ulemas and of the Shariat, as they understood it, on the affairs of the state. He amended the existing system of appointing persons learned in theology to judicial posts by preferring non-theologians for judicial offices. He wanted to make himself not only the absolute head of the state but also claimed himself to be 'the shadow of God'. At first he did not think it necessary to seek sanction or investiture from the Caliphate, but later he changed his attitude in view of his growing unpopularity among his subjects and sought and obtained confirmation of his position on the throne from the Caliph of Egypt. He even caused the name of the Caliph to be inscribed on his coins. Though a devout Muslim, Muhammad bin Tughlak was not a fanatic and unlike many of the Sultans of Delhi he was not guilty of persecuting people on grounds of religion.

Conquests and Foreign Policy: One of the first provinces to demand the attention and intervention of the Sultan was Bengal which had never quietly submitted to the Delhi Sultanate. Muhammad bin Tughlak introduced new administrative arrangements in accordance with which the province was split into three separate units with headquarters in Lakhnauti, Sonargaon and Satgaon. The governor in charge of each one of these units was associated with a nominee of the Sultan. Ghiyasuddin who had been brought captive to Delhi by Ghiyasuddin Tughlak was set free and reinstated at Sonargaon by order of the new Sultan. He was to have ruled jointly with the Delhi nominee, Bahram Khan. The arrangement did not work well. In 1327-28 A.D. Ghiyasuddin rose in revolt. His bid ended in failure. He was defeated and killed by Bahram Khan. But the Sultan's hold on Bengal did not remain unchallenged. Soon after, a powerful and ambitious nobleman named Ali Mubarak proclaimed himself as the independent ruler of Lakhanauti. No attempt was made to bring back the region under the Sultan's control and Lakhnauti was lost to Delhi.

In about 1327 A.D. the Mongols reappeared on the north-west under their leader Tarma Shirin. According to Firishta's account the Mongols overran Laghman and Multan and advanced towards Delhi. The Sultan, finding resistance impossible, purchased peace by paying a large sum of money to the invaders. The Mongol leader thereupon withdrew after having plundered vast areas in Gujarat and Sind. Recent attempts by Dr. Husain to interpret the offer of money by way of help to Tarma Shirin since he was then a refugee

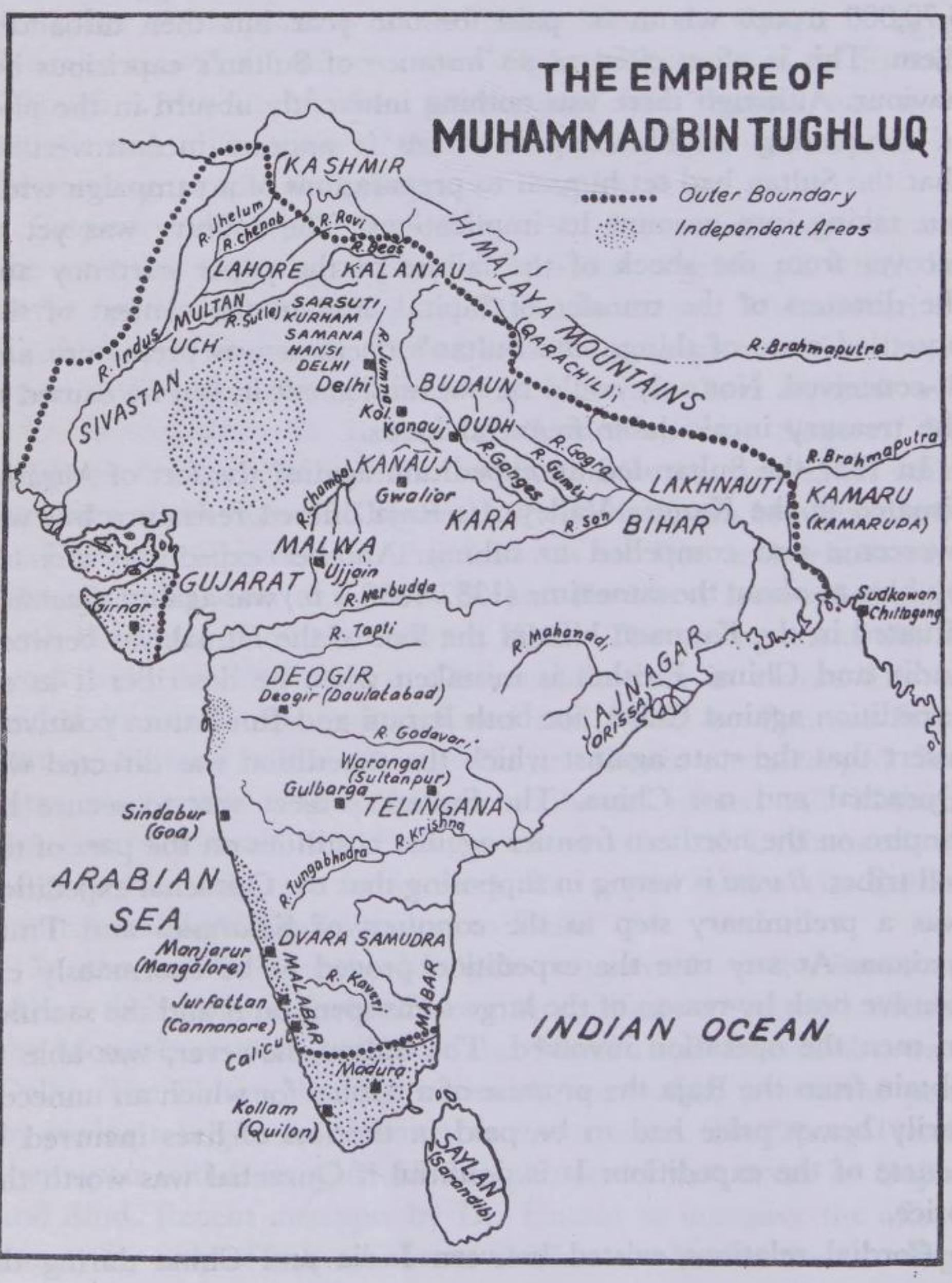
from his kingdom after having suffered defeat at the hands of Amir Choban, and not as a means of purchasing peace, seem at best a conjecture. Independent evidence points to the truth of Firishta's statement that the Mongols had ravaged the territory almost up to the vicinity of Delhi and that the Sultan was powerless to stop their raids.

Shortly after the withdrawal of the Mongols the Sultan formed the ambitious plan of conquering Transoxiana, Khurasan and Iraq. Barani informs us that the Sultan accordingly collected 3,70,000 troops whom he paid for one year but then disbanded them. This is often cited as an instance of Sultan's capricious behaviour. Although there was nothing inherently absurd in the plan of conquering neighbouring countries it appears incontrovertible that the Sultan had set himself to preparations of a campaign without taking into account its implications. The country was yet to recover from the shock of the failure of the paper currency and the disasters of the transfer of capital, and in the context of this unsettled state of things, the Sultan's decision was premature and ill-conceived. Not only could he not implement it, but he caused to the treasury incalculable financial losses.

In 1337 the Sultan led an expedition against the fort of *Nagarkot* situated in the Kangra Valley. Its Raja offered resistance but was overcome and compelled to submit. Another expedition directed by him at about the same time (1337-1338 A.D.) was against *Quarchal*, situated in the Kumaon hills at the foot of the Himalayas between India and China. Firishta is mistaken when he describes it as an expedition against China, for both Barani and Ibn Batuta positively assert that the state against which the expedition was directed was Qurachal and not China. The Sultan's object was to secure his empire on the northern frontier against hostilities on the part of the hill tribes. *Barani* is wrong in supposing that the Qurachal expedition was a preliminary step to the conquest of Khurasan and Transoxiana. At any rate the expedition proved to be enormously expensive both by reason of the large sums spent on it and the sacrifice in men the operation involved. The Sultan, however, was able to obtain from the Raja the promise of a tribute for which an unnecessarily heavy price had to be paid in the loss of lives incurred in course of the expedition. It is doubtful if Qurachal was worth this price.

Cordial relations existed between India and China during the

reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak. This is borne out by the fact that an envoy sent by the Chinese Emperor, Toghan Timur, was well received in the Delhi court. The object of the Chinese embassy was to secure the Sultan's permission to rebuild Buddhist temples in the Himalayan region which had been destroyed by the Sultan's troops while on their way to Qurachal. Muhammad bin Tughlak reciprocated by sending Ibn Batuta as a special envoy to the imperial court of China in 1342. The envoy returned in 1347 A.D.



Rebellions: Apart from the early rebellions referred to above, the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak was seriously disturbed by a series of rebellions from 1335 till almost the end of his reign. In the tenth year of his reign *Sayyid Jalal-ud-din Ahsan* who acted as the Kotwal of Ma'bar (former Pandya kingdom), the southernmost province of the empire, revolted. The Sultan personally started for the south via Daulatabad and Warangal. At the latter place a cholera epidemic broke out to which the Sultan himself became a victim. While there he also received the disturbing news of a famine in Delhi and of a rebellion in Lahore. So he hastened to return to the capital, leaving Ma'bar in a state of practical independence.

While the Sultan was away in the Deccan a revolt broke out in the Punjab. Its leader was *Amir Hulaju* who overpowered the governor of Lahore and proclaimed independence. The Sultan, however, took prompt action, despatched two senior officers from the Deccan who reinforced the troops of Khwaja Jahan. They met the rebels and re-occupied Lahore after routing Hulaju and his supporters.

In 1335-36 Daulatabad too became the scene of rebellious activities headed by *Malik Hushang*, son of the governor of the province. He took this indiscreet step on being informed that the Sultan was dead. He discovered the mistake too late and on the approach of the Sultan's troops he submitted. Uncharacteristically enough, Muhammad bin Tughlak pardoned him.

Bengal also became the centre of disturbances once again. In 1337 Qadr Khan, the governor of Lakhnauti, lost his life, being murdered by his armour-bearer *Fakruddin*. The latter took advantage of the state of confusion into which the affairs of the kingdom of Delhi had fallen, declared independence on usurping the throne of Lakhnauti. The Sultan, too pre-occupied with affairs nearer the capital which were of a more serious character, was unable to take effective steps to curb the pretensions of Fakruddin who was thus able to consolidate his authority and extend it gradually over the entire province. Bengal was thus lost to the Sultanate.

Other revolts which broke out at about the same time were those of *Kara* and *Bidar*, led respectively by Nizam Main and Nusrat Khan, governors of the two provinces. Both these revolts were, however, quickly suppressed. In 1339 Ali Shah, the officer in charge of revenue collection at *Gulbarga*, revolted, murdered the local Hindu chief and occupied Bidar. But this rebellion too was soon brought under control. In 1340-41 A.D. occurred the rebellion of

Ain-ul-Mulk, the governor of Oudh and Zafarabad. He was one of the most trusted and accomplished officers of the Sultan and his rebellion caused him the greatest surprise. The ostensible cause of the rebellion was a peremptory order of the Sultan asking him immediately to proceed to the Deccan and assume the Governorship of Daulatabad. Ain-ul-Mulk was persuaded to believe by some evil-doers that the order of transfer was motivated by the desire of the Sultan to render him weak and then to get rid of him. The rebellion, however, did not succeed. Ain-ul-Mulk was defeated and taken prisoner. The Sultan dismissed him from service but spared him his life.

Another centre of rebellious activities was *Multan* where Shahu Afghan raised the standard of revolt and occupied the city by driving out the Sultan's officers and troops. Muhammad, however, intervened and personally marched to the area of disturbance. At his approach the rebels took to flight and Multan was recovered.

The frontier too became restive where rebellion spread to *Sunam* and *Samana* under the initiative of the local Jat and Bhatti chiefs. The Sultan, however, was able to bring the situation under control through prompt military intervention.

The circle of rebellion was not yet full. *Vijayanagar* chose to secede from the Delhi Empire and emerged into virtual independence in 1336. *Devagiri's* turn came in 1345. We are told by Firishta that at the instigation of the foreign Amirs the people of this region 'rebelled in all quarters and the country was devastated and depopulated in consequence.' In *Malwa* and *Gujarat* too, symptoms of disaffection were manifest when the foreign nobles, at the prospect of the loss or curtailment of their privileges, rose in open defiance of the Sultan's authority.

The Gujarat rebellion took a serious dimension. Its main prop, Taghi, was hunted down by the Sultan at Thatta in Sind. Muhammad had to spend three years in order to bring back peace and order to the rebellion-infested province. After having restored order the Sultan proceeded to Sind to finally reduce the rebel leader. But while on his way from Gujarat to Thatta he fell ill and died (March 20, 1351). The cryptic comments of Badauni on the Sultan's death are significant: 'The king was freed from his people and they from the king.' A correct though perhaps a little merciless epitaph!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE SULTANATE

THE CLIMAX in point of territorial expansion was reached by the Delhi Sultanate during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak and his authority at the beginning was acknowledged over twenty-three provinces in which the big empire was divided. But it was even during the lifetime of that monarch that symptoms of disintegration of the empire became manifest. No doubt the final fall of the empire did not take place till 175 years had elapsed after the death of Muhammad bin Tughlak. But the challenge had come in the form of rebellions during the last years of Muhammad's reign and it continued to infest the kingdom whose history for the period of a century and three-quarters is one of unrelieved decline.

Firoz Shah Tughlak: Muhammad bin Tughlak left no male heir. His successor was his cousin Firoz Tughlak. His father was Rajjab, a younger brother of Sultan Ghiyasuddin and his mother a Bhatti Rajput. Muhammad specially liked this cousin, associated him with the administration of the state and even expressed the wish that he should succeed him. The times were abnormal due to widespread rebellions almost simultaneously breaking out in several parts of the empire. A strong person was needed at the helm of affairs. The nobles and the army leaders were satisfied that the new Sultan would live up to their expectations.

The immediate task confronting the new ruler was to suppress a move on the part of Khwaja-i-Jahan, deputy of the late Sultan, to proclaim at Delhi a minor as Sultan, claiming him to be the son of the late Sultan. Firoz had little difficulty in suppressing the move with the support of the nobility and the army chiefs who remained loyal to him.

On arrival at Delhi from Thatta, Firoz took up the charge of the government and appointed Malik-i-Maqbul as his prime minister. Born in a Brahmin family, Maqbul had later become a convert to Islam. He proved his abilities in the sphere of administration. On his advice the new Sultan adopted conciliatory measures like remission of debts and took steps with a view to ensuring security through improvement of law and order. An orthodox Sunni Muslim, Firoz, unlike his predecessor, placed himself under the control of

the Muslim divines and theologians and thus re-emphasised the theocratic character of the government.

Internal Reforms: The main interest of Firoz's reign centres round his internal reforms. He was not by nature an annexationist and he made little or no efforts to bring back the outlying provinces which had chosen to break away from the empire. Instead he directed his energies to domestic reforms, through which he aimed at the improvement of the material lot of the people. Revenue affairs were the first to attract his attention. The country had suffered from a great deal of economic setback in the days of his predecessor's rule, owing to exorbitant taxes, scarcity of food, near-famine conditions in several parts of the empire and extravagant expenses incurred over warfare and currency muddle. Firoz's aim was to heal up the wounds, extend relief and restore normal economy. He wrote off the *taqavi* loans advanced to the distressed people by the former Sultan, forbade the tax-collectors from taking recourse to coercive measures and provided for regular audit and accounting of state income and expenditure. He entrusted the work of assessing the probable income from state revenue to one of his trusted lieutenants, Khwaja Hisam-ud-din. He undertook extensive tours, made detailed investigations and fixed the revenue of the crown-lands at nearly seven crores of rupees. This enabled the government to strike a balance between income and expenditure.

For the purpose of giving relief to the tax-payers Firoz abolished twenty-four items of vexatious taxes and reduced the rates of land-revenue. A devout Muslim, he charged only four main taxes, in accordance with the Quranic law. There were *Kharaj* or land-tax, *Khams* or one-fifth of the booties captured in war, *Jizya* or poll-tax payable by the non-Muslims, and *Zakat* which meant $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ tax on property to be spent for specific religious purposes only. At a subsequent stage, to these four taxes Firoz added a fifth. This was an irrigation tax payable by cultivators who made use of the state canals. This tax was valued at one-tenth of the yield of the irrigated area. The Sultan took care to see that the revenue officers whom he paid liberal salaries would not resort to corruption or exaction.

To promote the free growth of commerce Firoz removed the artificial barriers and also abolished internal duties on the movement of merchandise from one province to another. As a result of these measures agriculture and commerce both showed signs of steady improvement. Prosperity followed and there was a general tendency

towards lowering of the price of essential commodities. In the words of Afif: 'The homes of the people were replete with grain, property, horses and furniture; every one had plenty of gold and silver; no woman was without her ornaments and no house without good beds and divans; wealth abounded and comforts were general.' The state did not suffer from financial bankruptcy during his reign.

The Sultan was a great builder. Five major canals, connecting such important sites as Hissar, Ghaghar, Mandavi, Hansi and Firozabad, were caused to be dug by him as part of his irrigation project. The lands watered by these canals grew to be prosperous centres of trade and agriculture. He was also a great builder of towns. 300 towns are supposed to have owed their existence and prosperity to his initiative and patronage. He is also credited with having constructed a number of splendid mosques, palaces, hospitals, baths and bridges. The number of gardens laid out under his orders was 1,200. These were sources of revenue to the state on account of the fruits they produced.

Firoz was, besides, a liberal patron of learning. He was responsible for the foundation of educational institutions usually attached to mosques. He extended his patronage to such well-known historians as Ziauddin Barani and Shams-i-Siraj Afif whose works are valuable source-materials for contemporary history. The Sultan himself wrote an autobiography *Fatuhat-i-Firozshahi*. His patronage of learning was not confined to original works in Persian language and literature only. He caused a number of Sanskrit works to be translated into Persian.

Consistent with his strict Sunni outlook, Firoz retained the structure of the Muslim system of law unaltered, with the *Qazi* and the *Mufti* forming its mainstay. But he took care to abolish torture which was generally resorted to as a means of ascertaining truth.

Some of his other measures, such as the establishment of employment bureaus, *Diwan-i-Khairat* or charity bureau and *Dar-ul-Shafa* or charitable hospitals, bear witness to his charitable and benevolent disposition. But much of the good effect of his reforms was marred by the religious bigotry which was part of his nature. His orthodoxy and surrender to the counsels of the sectarian theologians made him blind to the grievances of the non-Muslims who formed the bulk of his subjects. He encouraged forcible conversions and wounded the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus by ordering several of their places of worship to be destroyed or desecrated. His

attitude to the Shiahs and the Sufis was also marked by the same spirit of intolerance. Firoz's orthodoxy induced him to seek the sanction of his authority from the Caliph from whom he received formal investitures and robes of honour on ceremonial occasions.

In their zeal to eulogise the Sultan for his reforms, some scholars have gone to the length of describing him as the Akbar of the Sultanate. Both the authors of *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* and *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* have depicted Firoz as an ideal and benevolent ruler whose sole concern was to promote the welfare of his people. This is but a one-sided picture. In spite of his benevolent activities in some spheres, Firoz was a religious bigot. He was responsible for helping the revival of the influence of the reactionary Ulemas, Maulavis and Muftis in the affairs of the state. He was also lacking in vigour and refrained from making any serious attempt at recovering Bengal, the Deccan and South India. His decision to reintroduce the system of granting *jagir* was attended with adverse consequences. The indignities he reimposed on the Hindus were equally unfortunate in their results. The desecration of the temples of Jagannath in Puri and of Jwalamukhi in Nagarkot, in particular, demonstrates his inability to rise above sectarian intolerance. No doubt no Delhi Sultan is known to have introduced reforms on such a wide scale as he, but he was devoid of the qualities of statesmanship and liberalism such as Akbar possessed in abundance. As a modern writer observes: 'Firoz had not even a hundredth part of the genius of that great-hearted and broad-minded monarch.' While Akbar built up an empire broad-based on the support and good will of his people, Firoz did incalculable harm to the Sultanate through his weakness and vacillation in dealing with rebels, the reinstitution of the system of jagirs and the alienation of the Hindus. It has been rightly contended that 'on the whole, in spite of peace, prosperity and contentment that prevailed during the long reign of Firoz Shah, no one can possibly doubt that his policy and administrative measures contributed to a large extent to the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate, and accelerated the process of decline that had already set in during his predecessor's reign.'

Foreign Policy and Conquests: Sultan Firoz Shah's foreign policy suffered by contrast with his policy at home. It was lacking in vigour and was marked by vacillation and weakness. He reconciled himself to the loss of the provinces in the Deccan and South India and made no attempts at their recovery. He also refrained from any

serious effort to reassert his authority when it was repudiated in Mewar and Marwar in Rajputana. His half-hearted efforts to bring Bengal back under the Sultanate also met with failure.

In 1352 Hazi Illyias who assumed the style of *Shams-ud-din Illiyas Shah* brought the whole of Bengal under his effective rule. Not content with this, he led an attack on Tirhut, an integral part of the Sultanate. This amounted to a serious and unprovoked attack on the Sultanate. Firoz accordingly set out on an expedition at the head of a large army, consisting of 70,000 horses and a large body of infantry. Illyias left the capital Pandua for Ekdala which was better fortified. Firoz laid siege but did not stay long enough to subdue it. On the approach of the rains, he withdrew his army and returned to the capital. Whatever the reason of the Sultan's premature withdrawal, 'the invasion', as Thomas writes, 'only resulted in the confession of weakness.' Six years later there was trouble again in Bengal. Sikandar who had succeeded his father Illyias had his rival in Zafar Khan. Firoz came to the help of the latter. Sikandar took shelter in the fort of Ekdala but the Sultan chose to retire to his capital, leaving Bengal unsubdued.

On his way back to Delhi Firoz halted at *Jaunpur*. From there he marched on Puri where he ordered the desecration of the famed temple of Jagannath. The local Hindu ruler was compelled to pay an annual tribute as a token of submission (1360 A.D.).

In 1361 Firoz led an expedition against the hill-fort of *Nagarkot* whose subjugation by Muhammad bin Tughlak had not proved enduring. On the way Firoz was struck by the strategic importance of Sirhind where he caused a fort to be built. His move against Nagarkot was successful and he returned to the capital on receiving submission and tribute from the Nagarkot chief. A most interesting thing about this expedition is that among the booties collected by the Sultan was a treasure of valuable Sanskrit books. The Sultan caused three hundred of these books to be translated into Persian.

In 1362 the Sultan headed an expedition against *Thatta* with a large army composed of 90,000 horses and 480 elephants, in addition to a large number of boats which he had collected on the Indus to supplement his movements overland by operations on the water. On arrival his men met with stiff opposition from the ruler of Thatta. Shortly after, to add to his troubles, famine and pestilence broke out. The Sultan was obliged to withdraw towards Gujarat but he met major disaster as his army blundered into the Runn of Cutch.

All communications with Delhi were lost for some time. It was after long wanderings that the army was able to reach Gujarat. The Sultan thereafter resumed his march towards Thatta. In the meantime reinforcements arrived from Delhi. His efforts succeeded and the ruler of Thatta was forced to submit.

On return from Thatta the Sultan, as Afif writes, declared that he would not take up arms again except for suppression of rebellion. He thus refused to be drawn into war with the Bahmani kingdom which was then torn by internal dissensions. Three rebellions which broke out in Gujarat, Etawah and Katehar within a short time of each other were, however, speedily suppressed.

The last years of Firoz were troubled with court intrigues owing to the rival ambitions of his Prime Minister Khan-i-Jahan and the Sultan's eldest surviving son Muhammad Khan. For some time he was compelled to leave the affairs of the state in the hands of his son. But this did not prove a desirable or happy arrangement. The Sultan, therefore, resumed the control of state affairs in his own hands, nominating his grandson Tughlak Khan as his successor. The Sultan, overburdened with age, died soon after (September, 1388 A.D.).

End of Tughlakshahi Rule: Firoz's death was followed by an unseemly scramble for power, a period of dull monotony and wars of succession. His successor was his grandson *Ghiyasuddin Tughlak Shah II* who died shortly after, being murdered at the instigation of his rival *Abu Bakr* (February, 1389 A.D.). The latter, too, could not retain power for long and was soon after driven out by *Muhammad Shah* who had already acted as deputy of Firoz Shah during the latter's lifetime. Muhammad died after a brief spell of rule in January 1394. *Alauddin Sikandar Shah* who followed him to the throne also did not survive long. He died in March 1395. The throne thereupon passed into the possession of *Nasiruddin Mahmud*, the youngest son of Muhammad Shah, destined to be the last ruler of the dynasty. His authority was, however, disputed by another member of the family, *Nusrat Shah*, a grandson of Firoz Tughlak. For some time there were two rival Sultans, one ruling at Delhi and the other from Firozabad. This resulted in the steady decline of the power and prestige of the Sultanate. The provincial rulers were quick to take advantage of the situation. Jaunpur, Gujarat, Malwa, Gwalior and Khandesh seceded from the Sultanate. The Khokhars in the Punjab and the chiefs of Rajputana also repudiated allegiance to

the Sultan's authority. The Hindus of the Doab were on the verge of rebellion while Bayana and Kalpi emerged as independent units. Thus the Sultanate was already in a state of dissolution. When its fall was thus only a question of time the process was accelerated by an invasion led by Amir Timur. His invasion played the same part in the overthrow of the Delhi Sultanate as was played by Nadir Shah in that of the Timurid empire.

Timur's Invasion, 1398 A.D.

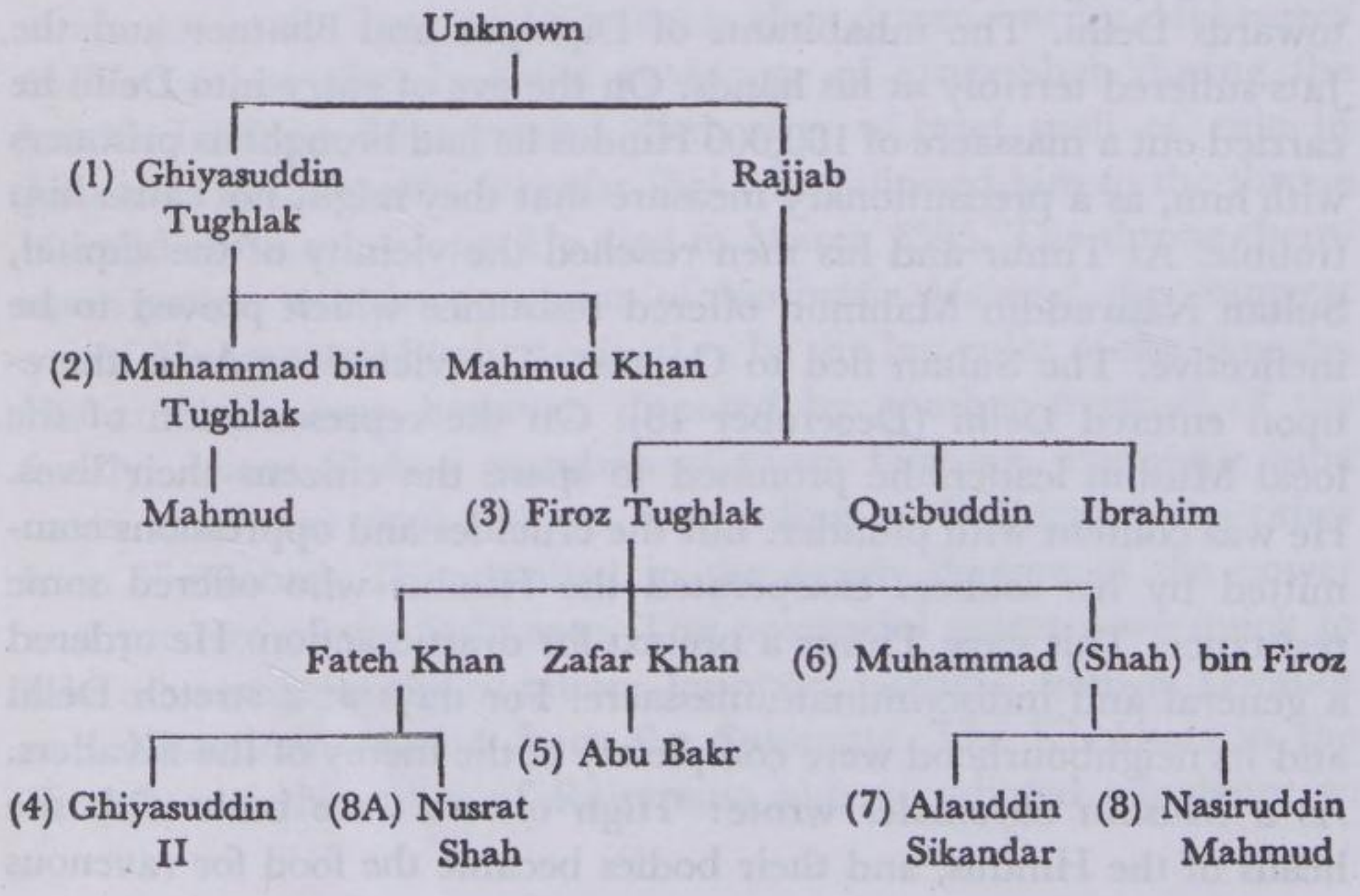
Amir Timur, ruler of Samarkhand, belonged to the Chagtai branch of the Barlas Turks. Prompted by an insatiable thirst for military glory and lust for conquests, he led a series of raids in different parts of Persia, Afghanistan and Mesopotamia. His success emboldened him to conceive projects of invasion of India, the land of fabulous wealth. The state of chronic confusion then prevalent in India and the prospect of the immediate dissolution of the Sultanate must have acted as additional incentives. The avowed object of the expedition, as Timur claimed, was to win over the land from idolatry to Islam.

Early in 1398 an advance unit of the army, under the command of his grandson Pir Muhammad arrived in India, laid siege to Multan and took it under occupation. In April, Timur himself came leading a large army. He crossed unopposed the Indus, the Jhelum and the Ravi, carrying on plunders and massacres all the way, and marched towards Delhi. The inhabitants of Dipalpur and Bhatner and the Jats suffered terribly at his hands. On the eve of entry into Delhi he carried out a massacre of 100,000 Hindus he had brought as prisoners with him, as a precautionary measure that they might not cause him trouble. As Timur and his men reached the vicinity of the capital, Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud offered resistance which proved to be ineffective. The Sultan fled to Gujarat. The victorious Amir thereupon entered Delhi (December 18). On the representation of the local Muslim leaders he promised to spare the citizens their lives. He was content with plunder. But the cruelties and oppressions committed by his soldiers exasperated the Hindus who offered some resistance. This gave Timur a pretext for drastic action. He ordered a general and indiscriminate massacre. For days at a stretch Delhi and its neighbourhood were completely at the mercy of the invaders. As a Muslim chronicler wrote: 'High towers were built with the heads of the Hindus, and their bodies became the food for ravenous

beasts and birds....Such of the inhabitants who escaped alive were made prisoners.' Timur himself wrote in his memoirs, *Malfuzat-i-Timuri*: 'The spoil was so great that each man secured from fifty to a hundred prisoners, men, women and children....The other booty was immense in rubies, diamonds, garnets, pearls and other gems....Excepting the quarter of the Sayyids, the Ulema and other Musulmans, the whole city was sacked.' Timur, whose object was not conquest but mere plunder, left Delhi after a stay of fifteen days, laden with vast quantities of wealth and rich booties. On his way back to his kingdom he carried out usual plunders in Meerut, the Siwalik country, Hardwar and Jammu. Before stepping out of India he entrusted the government of Multan, Lahore and Dipalpur to Khizr Khan, a former governor of Multan. He had caused India more suffering and misery than was done by any conqueror before his days.

Timur's invasion was the finishing blow to the power and prestige of the Tughlakshahi rulers. Within a couple of months of Timur's departure from Delhi, Sultan Nusrat Shah, who had been driven out, came back to the capital to find it in a state of unprecedented confusion. He was soon replaced by his rival, Nasiruddin Mahmud. Shorn of the last trace of prestige, the new ruler was a mere puppet

Genealogical Table of the Tughlak Dynasty



in the hands of Mallu Iqbal, the powerful Prime Minister. Neither Mallu nor his nominal master who survived him was able either to recover the lost territories or to restore the effective authority of the Sultanate which had been for many years steadily on the decline. With the death of Nasiruddin Mahmud in 1413 the rule of the Tughlakshahi Sultans came to an inglorious end.

The Sayyid Dynasty

The founder of the Sayyid dynasty (it was so called since Khizr Khan claimed to be a descendant of the Prophet—a claim which, however, seems to be doubtful) was Khizr Khan (1414-1421 A.D.), though he did not assume the title of a sovereign and preferred to regard himself as the viceroy of Shah Rukh, the Timurid prince. His first attempts were directed towards the recovery of such lost territories as Etawah, Katehar, Kanauj and Kampil. But his success was only partial. His authority, in the circumstances, did not extend beyond Delhi, Doab and the Punjab.

His son and successor *Mubarak* assumed the title of Shah and made attempts without much success to subdue the Khokhars and the inhabitants of the Doab. He was soon after murdered at the instigation of his ambitious Wazir, Sarwar-ul-Mulk (1434 A.D.). The next ruler was his nephew *Muhammad Shah* who, immediately after his accession, was threatened with an invasion by Mahmud Khalji of Malwa. The latter advanced as far as Delhi but was obliged to return to his kingdom which lay exposed to the danger of an attack by the Sultan of Gujarat. Delhi was thus saved but the Sultan could not halt the process towards rapid disintegration. The precarious situation in which the Sultan was placed is attested by the chronicler in the following words: 'There were Amirs at twenty *krosh* from Delhi who shook off their allegiance and began to prepare themselves for resistance.' In the midst of this continuous decline and confusion the Sultan died in 1445 A.D. His son *Alauddin Alam Shah* was proclaimed as the new Sultan but he was forced to abdicate within a few years in favour of Bahlol Lodi, the former governor of Lahore who had made an attempt earlier, in the reign of Muhammad Shah, to seize the government. That attempt had failed then, but when repeated in 1451 A.D. it succeeded.

The Lodi Rulers

The first ruler *Bahlol* (1451-1489 A.D.) was not lacking in vigour but

he had the practical sense to realise that it was impossible to restore the former power and prestige of the Sultanate. He therefore directed his efforts towards partial recovery and keeping himself on the throne. He thus maintained cordial relations, as far as possible, with the nobility whose support was essential for retaining the throne. He, however, suppressed symptoms of rebellion in Multan, Mewat and the Doab. He not only foiled an attack on Delhi by Mahmud Shah of Jaunpur but even carried the war into the kingdom of his enemy and brought it under submission. Among other areas in which he was able to extend his sway were Kalpi, Dholpur and Gwalior. We know from the author of *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana* that Bahlol led an expedition against Chitor and compelled the Rana to submit. This claim is not, however, corroborated by any evidence and is probably unreliable.

Bahlol's successor was his son Nizam Khan who took the title of *Sikandar Shah*. His reign (1489-1517 A.D.) was the most glorious epoch in the history of the post-Tughlakshahi period of the Sultanate. His first task on accession was to consolidate his position by reducing his rivals to submission. He first took steps to disarm his uncle Alam Khan and his ally Isa Khan who harboured hostile designs against the Sultan. He next turned against his cousin Azam Humayun who was an aspirant for the throne and defeated and dispossessed him of Kalpi. Another opponent Tatar Khan Lodi was also similarly reduced.

Having thus secured his position on the throne Sikandar turned his attention to Jaunpur. His elder brother Barbak Shah had been acting as the governor of Jaunpur. Sikandar tried conciliatory measures to persuade Barbak Shah to live in subordinate alliance with him. But his peaceful efforts being of no avail, Sikandar decided on an open trial of strength. In the encounter that followed Barbak was defeated and compelled to take shelter in Badaun. Sikandar, however, thought it discreet to restore him to Jaunpur as its governor, but took care to place his own nominees in charge of several of the fiefs into which he caused the province to be divided. This arrangement did not, however, prove to be satisfactory. This was because of Barbak Shah's own incompetence and lack of vigour. He was unable to keep order within the province and was even forced to leave it. Sikandar intervened and restored his brother for a second time to Jaunpur. But Barbak failed to improve and was eventually compelled to resign in favour of a nominee of Sikandar.

Sikandar frustrated an attempt at rebellion by Hosain Shah Sharqi, the former ruler of Jaunpur who had been dethroned by Bahlol Lodi and had some supporters in the court of Bengal. This brought Sikandar into conflict with Bihar which was then a part of Bengal. The suppression of Hosain Shah Sharqi was followed by the extension of Lodi authority in Bihar. The Bihar episode did not end here. It brought the Sultan into conflict with the Bengal ruler Alauddin Husain Shah. But fortunately before any conflict could take place, the parties agreed to settle their differences through negotiations. A treaty was concluded, each party binding itself not to invade the territory of the other. The Bengal Sultan also promised not to offer shelter to Sikandar's enemies.

Other conquests of Sikandar included Dholpur, Narwar, Chanderi and Nagpur, though his repeated attempts to subjugate Gwalior did not succeed.

In an attempt to tone up the administration Sikandar instituted a system of proper audit of the state's income and expenditure, enforced a strict code of conduct for the nobility, reorganised and strengthened the system of espionage and administered justice strictly in accordance with laws. He also effected considerable improvement in the material condition of the people by abolishing duties on corn and reducing unnecessary tolls on movements of commodities.

His religious policy, however, was vitiated by his bigotry. He caused many temples to be desecrated. He even put a ban on the Hindus bathing in the Jumna. He also sought conversions through use of force as well as allurements.

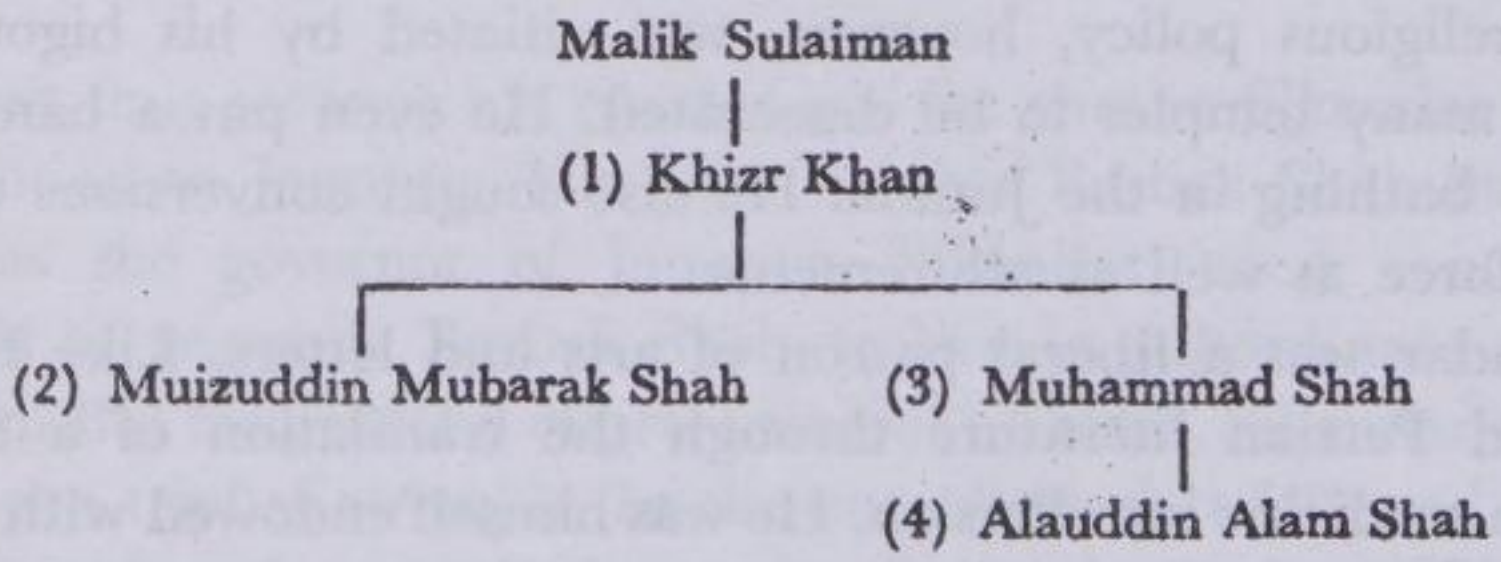
Sikandar was a liberal patron of arts and letters. Like Firoz he enriched Persian literature through the translation of a Sanskrit work on medicine into Persian. He was himself endowed with literary talents and is known to have composed Persian verses. One of his outstanding achievements was the foundation of the city of Agra which was destined to rival the glories and grandeur of the imperial city of Delhi. He spent his last days at Agra where he died on November 21, 1517.

The last Lodi sovereign of Delhi was *Ibrahim Lodi* who succeeded his father Sikandar in 1517 A.D. He was lacking in the virtues of his illustrious father and was both tactless and incompetent. He alienated the proud Afghan nobles by his attempts to deny them many of their privileges. As Firishta writes: 'He said publicly that all

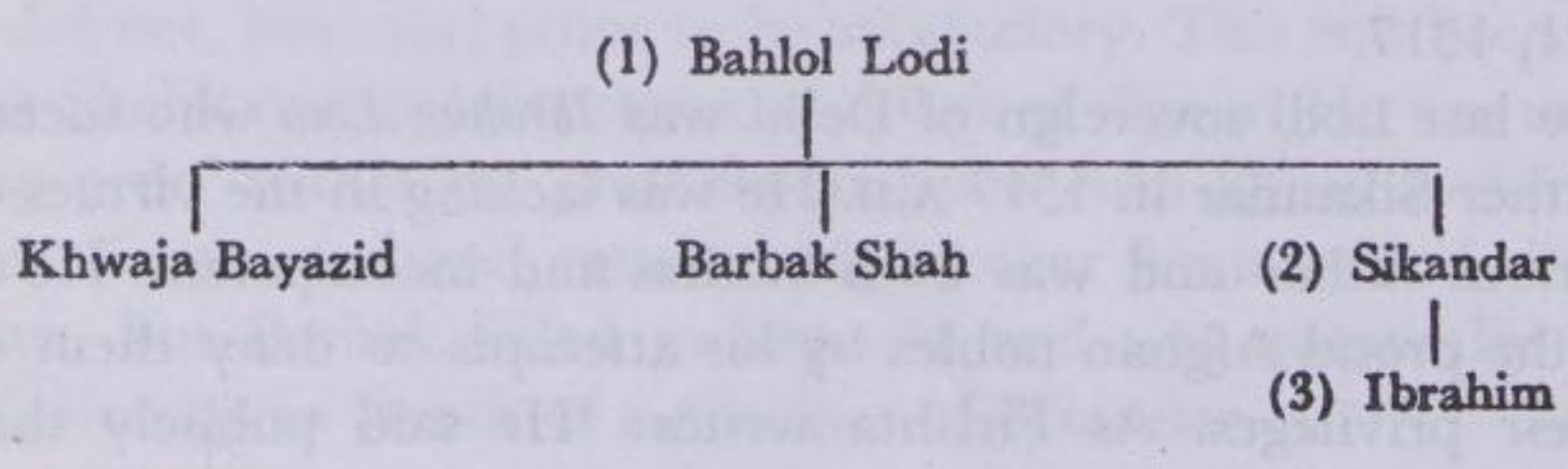
around (the Sultan) should be considered as subjects and servants of the state; and the Afghan chiefs, who had hitherto been allowed to sit in his presence, were constrained to stand in front of the throne, with their hands crossed before them.' Such a policy was attended with grave risks, since with the prestige of monarchy greatly reduced, it was hardly prudent to attempt to reduce the nobility to the same level as others. The disaffected among the nobility tried to replace Ibrahim by his brother Jalal. But the attempt failed. Finding his chances of success remote, Jalal took to flight and sought shelter in Gwalior. Ibrahim followed him there and after reducing Gwalior, took Jalal captive. The unfortunate prince was killed by the order of the Sultan. Ibrahim also suppressed several other attempts at rebellion by the nobility. These successes made him more insolent than ever. A large section of the nobility were thus alienated and looked for an opportunity to contest his authority, and if possible, to get rid of him. There were open rebellions in Bihar and the Punjab under their respective governors Bahadur Shah and Daulat Khan Lodi. The latter established contact with Babur, the king of Kabul, and invited him to help him to get rid of Ibrahim. Another Lodi chief,

Genealogical Table

THE SAYYIDS



THE LODIS



the Sultan's uncle Alam Khan, also joined hands with the Kabul ruler. Yet another powerful enemy of the Sultan was Rana Sangram Sinha of Mewar who had recently defended his kingdom against an attack of the Sultan. Babur accepted the invitation. The result was the first battle of Panipat (April 21, 1526 A.D.) in which Ibrahim was defeated and killed. His death brought the Sultanate, which had lasted for a little over three centuries, to an end.

Causes of the Decline and Downfall of the Delhi Sultanate

A striking phenomenon in Indian history prior to the rise of the British Raj is that imperial expansion invariably suffered decline immediately after reaching its climax. The Delhi Sultanate reached its limits of expansion under Muhammad bin Tughlak, but the story of its decline also dates from the reign of the same monarch, just as centuries ago Asoka's empire began to decline even during the lifetime of that great monarch. This experience of decline almost immediately following the height of expansion was repeated in the reign of the great Timurid Emperor Aurangzib Alamgir. In each case, specific causes, different from one another, were at work; but it is possible to trace the presence of one common factor. This was the vastness of the dominions in itself. In an age of slow communication vastness of territories is a source of weakness rather than strength because no central government, however strong, can keep a firm hold over outlying provinces often situated at a great distance from the centre of the empire. The conquest of South India was a brilliant military exploit but it is doubtful if it was worth its price. The south was never reconciled to the authority of the Sultanate which therefore failed to be effective. The all-India character of the empire was never a reality; it remained throughout a loose fabric of virtually separate units ruled by Muslim governors or Hindu chiefs over whom the central government could wield no authority except by military coercion.

In explaining the causes of the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate it is customary to hold Muhammad bin Tughlak largely responsible for it. It is true that the symptoms of decline had become manifest during his rule. The disintegration of the empire was the inevitable outcome of a series of provincial rebellions that occurred while he was on the throne. It is also undeniable that for the alienation of the provincial units his capricious policy or rather the lack of policy was to a large extent responsible. But it will be unfair to lay the entire

blame at his door. In all fairness to him it should be noted that the downfall of the empire did not occur till a century and three quarters had elapsed after his death. Such damage as he did, could have been very well repaired in the long interval between his death and the completion of the downfall. Few of his successors can be absolved of contributing to the progressive decline of the Sultanate. Sultan Firoz Shah, for instance, had a major share of responsibility, perhaps a larger share than that of his predecessor. The re-institution of jagirs, the increase in the number of slaves, the alienation of the Hindus were some of the inexpedient measures of Firoz which did immense harm to the Sultanate.

It would not, however, be fair and correct to attribute the decline to the lapses of individual rulers. The real explanation is to be sought in the character of the rule of the Sultans, which was synonymous with personal despotism. It worked efficiently within certain limits so long as there was a strong and vigorous personality like Iltutmish, Balban, Alauddin at its head. But its inherent weakness stood revealed as soon as the strong hands that guided it were removed. A government which depended for its working on the character of the single person presiding over it was basically a deficient government.

The deterioration of the Muslim aristocracy which had ceased to be sturdy fighters as it was before and had degenerated into a rabble of selfish fortune-hunters and ease-loving debauchees has also to be taken into account. Their selfish intrigues and military incapacity accelerated the process towards decline and dissolution.

The failure of the Delhi Sultans to win the good will and support of the Hindus who formed the bulk of the Indian population was another source of weakness which recoiled on the fortunes of the empire. None of the Sultans was enough of a statesman to attempt to broadbase his empire on the good will of his subjects, irrespective of their religion or creed. The Hindus were not only not drawn loyally to the Sultanate but were positively hostile. In the face of alienation of the bulk of the population it was impossible to rear the structure of a stable government.

The coup de grâce to the disintegrating remnant of the empire was provided by the invasion of Timur. After 1398 the question was not whether but when the empire would complete its process to headlong dissolution and it was not slow to come.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

SUCCESSION STATES IN THE NORTH

THE PROCESS of disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate had already set in in the thirties of the fourteenth century when, judged by the extent of its territories, it was apparently at its height. That process went on unchecked till at the death of Nasiruddin Mahmud (1413 A.D.) 'the rule of the Lord of the world extended from Delhi to Palam.' In the subsequent years Bahlol Lodi and Sikandar made attempts at recovery and consolidation which only partially succeeded. On the whole, the tendency towards decline went on nearly unchecked till with the defeat of Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat the dissolution of the Sultanate became complete. In the wake of this dissolution a number of independent kingdoms emerged.

Kashmir: Hindu rule in Kashmir was supplanted by a Muslim adventurer named Shah Mirza who took the title of *Shams-ud-din Shah* (1346 A.D.), though it did not form at any stage a part of the Delhi Sultanate. One of his successors *Sikandar* (1393-1416 A.D.) enforced forcible conversion and reduced the Hindus to a minority. The most celebrated among the Muslim rulers of Kashmir was *Zain-ul-Abidin* (1420-1470 A.D.). He was widely respected for his liberal and tolerant views. He recalled many Hindu exiles and permitted the forcibly converted to revert to their original faith. He was also a great patron of arts and letters. He had the *Mahabharata* and the *Rajatarangini* translated into Persian.

In 1561 a new dynasty came to power under *Ghazi Shah* who belonged to the tribe of the Chakks. His successors ruled till Kashmir was conquered by Akbar and annexed to the Mughal Empire in 1586 A.D.

Jaunpur: The history of Jaunpur as an independent kingdom dates from 1394 A.D. when an eunuch named *Malik Sarwar* broke away from the Sultanate, asserted his independence and assumed the style of *Sultan-ush-Sharq*. He even added to the kingdom the former province of Oudh, a part of the Doab, Tirhut and Bengal. His son and successor *Mubarak Shah* assumed the full title of a sovereign ruler and struck coins in his own name. It was during his rule that an attempt was made by Mallu Iqbal, the Prime Minister of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, to reassert Delhi's authority on Jaunpur. The

attempt failed but this was the beginning of hostilities between Delhi and Jaunpur which continued for several generations.

The next ruler *Ibrahim Shah* (1402-1436 A.D.) was the greatest representative of the Sharqi dynasty. He not only waged war with Delhi but also invaded Bengal, though without success. His fame rests chiefly on his liberal patronage of learning and arts. He established many state educational centres which undertook the publication of many learned works on Muslim law and theology. He had many splendid buildings and mosques constructed, which by their distinctiveness are known to have given rise to the Jaunpur school of architecture. Ibrahim's successor *Mahmud Shah* carried on the war with Delhi. He captured Chunar but failed in his expedition against Kalpi. The last ruler of the Sharqi dynasty was *Husain Shah* (1458-1479 A.D.). He was compelled to suffer reverses and even to leave Jaunpur which was placed under the charge of Barbak Shah, the eldest son of Sultan Bahlol Lodi. With the death of Husain Shah while in exile in Bihar, the Sharqi ruling family came to an end. Though the rule of the Sharqis covered a brief span of eighty-five years, it saw the emergence of Jaunpur as a prosperous centre of cultural and artistic activities.

Malwa: Malwa emerged into virtual independence under the leadership of an Afghan noble, named *Dilwar Khan Ghuri*, in the closing years of the fourteenth century. His son *Hushang Shah* (1406-1435 A.D.) adopted the style of a full-fledged sovereign ruler. He was an ambitious and warlike king who waged wars with Gujarat, Orissa, Jaunpur and Delhi. They did not, however, bring him much material gain. Soon after his death a new dynasty, viz. that of the Khalji's, usurped the throne of Malwa (1436 A.D.).

The founder of the Khalji dynasty of Malwa was *Mahmud Khalji I* (1436-1469 A.D.). He proved to be a great soldier, waging wars with the contemporary rulers of Gujarat and Mewar, besides the Delhi and the Bahmani Sultans. The war with Mewar, then ruled by Rana Kumbha, was, however, of an indecisive character as both sides claimed success and built towers of victory. But there is little doubt that he had made substantial additions to his kingdom and he received formal recognition from the Caliph and the king of Egypt. Firishta extols his virtues and writes that his subjects, Muslims and Hindus, lived side by side in friendly and cordial relations with one another. His son *Ghiyas-ud-din* (1469-1500 A.D.) who succeeded him was, by nature, a man of religious and peaceful disposition. The

last important ruler of the dynasty was *Mahmud Khalji II* (1510-1531 A.D.). His dependence on the Rajputs in preference to the Muslim nobility and the consequent tension between the two groups encouraged the Sultan of Gujarat to lead an invasion of Malwa. This was repulsed by the Khalji ruler with the help of the Rajput Prime Minister Medini Rai of Chanderi. But Mahmud Khalji became involved in a conflict with Rana Sanga of Mewar in course of which he was defeated and taken prisoner. The Rana acted generously and set him free. Mahmud Khalji was also called upon to meet a renewed invasion led by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. In the conflict that followed Bahadur Shah won and annexed Malwa to the kingdom of Gujarat (1531 A.D.).

Gujarat: The emergence of Gujarat as an independent kingdom dates from 1396 when its governor Zafar Khan proclaimed his independence, assuming the title of *Sultan Muzaffar Shah*. He waged war with the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat, and captured Idar. His grandson *Ahmad Shah* (1411-1442 A.D.) was one of the greatest Sultans of Gujarat. He fought with success against the rulers of Malwa, Asirgarh, and other neighbouring states, including some petty kingdoms of Rajputana. He was a great builder and won fame as the founder of the city of Ahmadabad where he set up his capital.

The next important ruler was *Mahmud Begarha* (1458-1511 A.D.). Great as a soldier, as a ruler and as an administrator, he is considered as the greatest king of Gujarat. He fought against Mahmud Khalji I of Malwa and occupied Girnar and Champaner. He also punished the pirates of Dwarka. He defeated a Portuguese naval expedition in the harbour of Chaul with the help of a naval force sent by the Sultan of Egypt. But the success did not lead to any permanent gains and in the following years the Portuguese avenged their defeat at Diu and compelled the Sultan to offer them a site for a factory there. The next ruler *Muzaffar Shah II* (1511-1526 A.D.) fought against Rana Sanga of Mewar—a conflict which continued in the reign of his successor Bahadur Shah (1526-1537 A.D.). The latter had to his credit victories won against Rana Sanga's successor and the Sultan of Malwa. His other enemy was Emperor Humayun of Delhi who, however, was unable to wage war with Gujarat earnestly because of his preoccupation with Sher Khan. The death of Bahadur Shah in 1537 A.D. was followed by a steady decline in the power and fortunes of the kingdom of Gujarat.

Rajasthan: Of the numerous principalities into which Rajputana was divided three deserve special notice. These were Mewar, Marwar and Amber.

The Guhilots who ruled in *Mewar* had been obliged to suffer the sack of their capital *Chitor* at the hands of Alauddin Khilji's troops (1303 A.D.). Within a little over sixty years, the Guhilots, who had been ruling in other parts of Mewar, were able to recover their capital under *Rana Hamir* (1364 A.D.). The most well-known among his successors was *Rana Kumbha* (1433-1468 A.D.). He fought against the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat, and set up a pillar of victory in commemoration of his success. He was also known to have been a great builder of fortresses and a patron of learning. Rana Kumbha's glories were eclipsed by those of *Maharana Sangram Singh* (1509-1528 A.D.). He possessed first-rate military talent and bore eighty wounds on his body, received in numerous battles in which he engaged. He won conspicuous success in his wars with the Sultans of Gujarat and Malwa. The Malwa Sultan was taken prisoner by him, though the Rana with characteristic generosity set him at liberty. He also repulsed an invasion led by Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. Later he made an attempt to drive out Babur, who, contrary to his expectations, did not leave India after his victory in the first battle of Panipat. Sanga's attempt did not succeed. He was defeated at the battle of Khanua (1527 A.D.). Mewar, however, remained an independent kingdom for nearly a hundred years more till its ruler, Rana Amar Singh, was forced to submit to the authority of Emperor Jahangir.

The next important kingdom in Rajputana was *Marwar* (modern *Jodhpur*) ruled over by the Rathors. According to Col. Tod the Rathors were descended from the Gahadavalas of Kanauj. The history of Marwar begins virtually with the reign of *Chunda* (1394-1421 A.D.). His successor Jodha (1438-1488 A.D.) strengthened his kingdom by building the great fort of Mandor and the town of Jodhpur. The most celebrated among the Marwar rulers was *Maldeva* (1532-1562 A.D.) who won great renown by his wars against Sher Shah.

The third important state in mediaeval Rajasthan was *Amber* (modern *Jaipur*). Its rulers belonged to the Kachhawaha branch of the Rajputs. This kingdom is believed to have been founded in the tenth century A.D. For many years Amber seemed to have been under the suzerain authority of the Guhilots of Mewar. The

importance of Amber as a distinct political unit dates from the fourteenth century. With the growth and expansion of the Mughal Empire under Akbar, Amber chose to play a different but by no means unimportant role as a subordinate ally of the Mughals. Bihari Mal of Amber was the first important Rajput ruler to submit to the growing imperial authority of the Mughals.

Bengal: The authority of the Delhi Sultanate over Bengal was not very effectively enforced at any time. But even that semblance of authority virtually disappeared when Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlak refrained from intervention, leaving *Sikandar Shah* practically independent. Sikandar's son and successor *Ghiyasuddin Azam* (1393-1410 A.D.) established his reputation as an able and benevolent ruler. He is said to have established friendly relations with China and corresponded with the celebrated poet Hafiz of Iran. His son *Saif-ud-din Hamza Shah* who succeeded him was, however, a weak and incompetent ruler. About this time *Raja Ganesh*, a Brahmin zemindar of Bhaturia and Dinajpur, acquired such power and preeminence as enabled him to secure the throne for himself (1414 A.D.). He is also believed to have struck coins as a token of his independent authority. There is an alternative theory that Ganesh ruled in the name of two puppet rulers whom he did not actually remove from the throne. Ganesh's successor was his son Jadu who embraced Islam and came to be known as *Sultan Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Shah*. He courted great unpopularity by his persecution of the Hindus. His son *Shamsh-ud-din Ahmad* (1431-1442) also was an unsuccessful ruler. With his death the dynasty of Ganesh came to an end, and the old line of Illiyas Shahi rulers was restored in the person of *Nasiruddin Abul Muzaffar Mahmud Shah*. He ruled in peace for seventeen years and undertook the construction of a few splendid buildings at Gaur and a mosque at Satgaon. His successors ruled till 1486 when an Abyssinian adventurer seized the throne, assuming the title of Barbak Shah. The oppressive rule of the Abyssinian Sultans was ended in 1493 by *Alauddin Husain Shah* (1493-1519 A.D.). The dynasty founded by him struck deep roots and ruled for over half a century. He is regarded as the most celebrated among the Sultans of mediaeval Bengal. He offered shelter to Sultan Husain Shah of Jaunpur after he had been expelled from his kingdom by Sultan Bahlol Lodi of Delhi. This brought him into conflict with the Lodi Sultan till they came to terms after settling the boundaries between the two kingdoms. Husain Shah is also said to have sent expeditions against

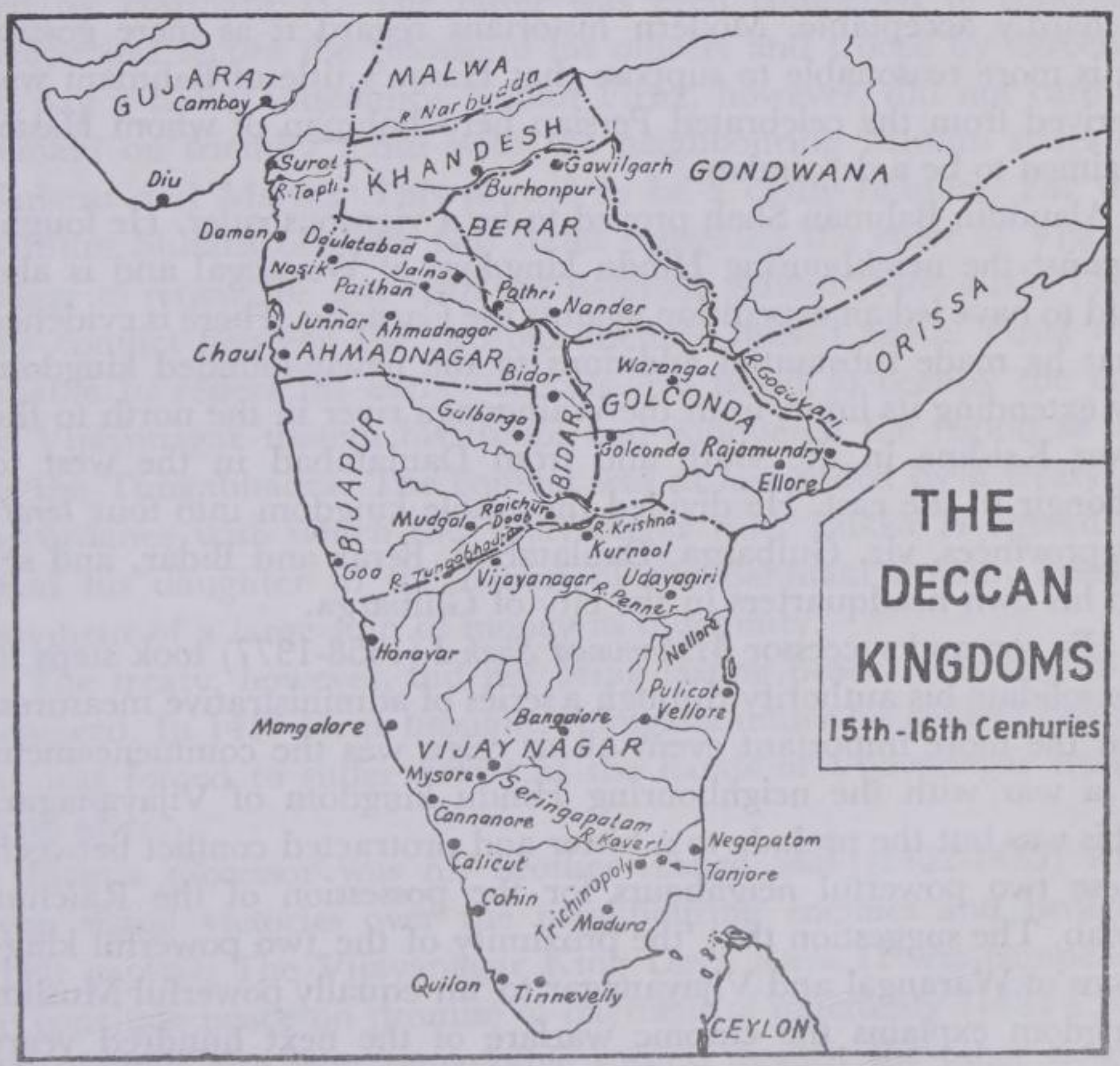
the rulers of Assam and Orissa. These resulted in the occupation of Magadh and Kamtapur in Cooch Behar. We are told that 'the tributary Rajas as far as Orissa paid implicit obedience to his commands'. He also won the love and good will of his subjects, irrespective of their faith, by virtue of his policy of religious toleration.

His son and successor *Nusrat Shah* (1519-1532 A.D.) was, like his father, an able and powerful ruler. He gave shelter to many Afghan nobles after they had left Delhi following Babur's victory at Panipat, and entered into diplomatic relations with Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. He also conquered Tirhut. Nusrat Shah was well-known as a patron of literature and art. *The Mahabharata* is said to have been translated into Bengali under his patronage. He was responsible for the construction of the two famous mosques at Gaur, known as the *Bara Sona Masjid* and *Qadam Rasul*. His successor *Ghiyas-ud-din Mahmud Shah* (1533-1538) was the last independent Sultan of Bengal. He was defeated by Sher Shah who brought the province under his allegiance.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

KINGDOMS IN THE SOUTH

Khandesh: The province of Khandesh situated in the Tapti river valley owed allegiance to the Delhi Sultanate till the end of Firoz Tughlak's reign. In the period of confusion following his death the governor of the province, *Malik Raja Faruqi*, proclaimed his independence. Soon after he was faced with an invasion led by Sultan Muzaffar Shah I of Gujarat. He was unable to repulse it and suffered defeat. His son *Malik Nasir* succeeded him in 1399. He strengthened his position by the occupation of the strong fortress of Asirgarh, but before long he was confronted with hostilities from two quarters—Sultan Ahmad Shah of Gujarat and the Bahmani ruler Alauddin Ahmad. In both instances he was forced to suffer defeat. The next important ruler of Khandesh was *Adil Khan II* who came to the throne in 1457. He not only adopted measures to strengthen the



kingdom but also added to it the neighbouring region of Gondwana. His death was followed by a period of confusion which was taken advantage of by the ambitious Sultans of Gulbarga and Gujarat. The Gujarat Sultan, Mahmud Begarha, was even able to place a nominee of his, Adil Khan, on the throne of Khandesh. His successors continued to rule over the kingdom till it was conquered by Akbar in 1601 A.D.

The Bahmani Kingdom: The emergence of the Bahmani Sultanate as an independent kingdom was the outcome of the revolt by the Deccanese nobles against Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlak. The choice of the nobility at first fell on Ismail Mukh who was proclaimed the ruler of the kingdom with the title of *Nasiruddin Shah*. As he was well advanced in age and lacking in vigour he resigned soon after in favour of Hasan who assumed the title of *Abul Muzaffar Alauddin Bahman Shah* with the approval of the nobility (1347 A.D.). According to Firishta's version the title of Bahman was chosen by Hasan in memory of his master, a Brahman named Gangoo for whom he had worked as a servant in his early days. This version is hardly acceptable. Modern historians regard it as mere gossip. It is more reasonable to suppose that Hasan's title of Bahmani was derived from the celebrated Persian hero Bahman of whom Hasan claimed to be a descendant.

Alauddin Bahman Shah proved to be a vigorous ruler. He fought against the neighbouring Hindu kingdom of Warangal and is also said to have led an expedition against the Carnatic. There is evidence that he made substantial additions to the newly-founded kingdom by extending its limits from the Wainganga river in the north to the river Krishna in the south and from Daulatabad in the west to Bhongir in the east. He divided the whole kingdom into four *tarafs* or provinces, viz. Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar, and set up his own headquarters in the city of Gulbarga.

His son and successor *Muhammad Shah I* (1358-1377) took steps to consolidate his authority through a series of administrative measures. But the more important event of his reign was the commencement of a war with the neighbouring Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. This was but the prelude to a bitter and protracted conflict between these two powerful neighbours for the possession of the Raichur Doab. The suggestion that 'the proximity of the two powerful kingdoms of Warangal and Vijayanagar to an equally powerful Muslim kingdom explains the chronic warfare of the next hundred years

that characterises the history of the Deccan'—is an attempt at simplification of the situation in terms of communal or religious factors. The conflict, there is reason to believe, had its origin in a desire on the part of the combatants to obtain the possession of the strategically important region between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, which was also rich in its mineral resources. It would, therefore, be more correct to accept the position thus stated: 'The rivalry between the Bahmani kingdom and Vijayanagar was primarily due to those political and economic factors which led, even in the Hindu period, to age-long struggles between the powers who occupied the two sides of the Krishna-Tungabhadra line such as the Chalukyas and the Pallavas, the Rashtrakutas and the Cholas etc.'

The conflict thus started was continued by Muhammad's two immediate successors *Mujahid* (1377-1378) and *Muhammad Shah II* (1378-1397). It assumed serious proportions under the next ruler *Firuz Shah* (1397-1422). In the first phase of the conflict the Bahmani army succeeded in repulsing an attack by the Vijayanagar troops led by Harihara II. The latter was even compelled to conclude peace and secure the release of his officers and troops by agreeing to pay a heavy indemnity. Sultan Firuz, however, did not care to remain on friendly terms with the neighbouring Muslim states of Gujarat and Malwa. This proved to be a costly blunder. For the Muslim Sultans of those two states instigated the ruler of Vijayanagar to renew the war with the Bahmani Sultan (1406 A.D.). Thus the conflict between the two old enemies started again. Firuz was unable to repeat his earlier success. He failed to occupy the city of Vijayanagar though his troops had conquered the region as far as the Tungabhadra. The conflict was at last ended by a treaty in accordance with which the Vijayanagar ruler Bukka II agreed to send his daughter to the harem of the Bahmani Sultan, besides payment of a large sum of money as indemnity.

The treaty, however, did not bring lasting peace. War was soon renewed. In 1417 Firuz brought Telingana under his control though he was forced to suffer defeat at the hands of Vijayanagar troops soon after.

Firuz's successor was his brother *Ahmad Shah* (1422-1435) who won signal victories over the neighbouring enemies and ravaged their capital. The Vijayanagar King Deva Raya II was compelled to conclude peace on promise of payment of indemnity (1423 A.D.). The Sultan also won remarkable success against the other neigh-

bouring Hindu state of Warangal. He captured the fortress of Warangal and put an end to the rule of the Kakatiyas. Yet another enemy defeated by him was Hushang Shah of Malwa. He also waged war with the Sultan of Gujarat over the possession of the island of Mahim but did not succeed.

The next ruler *Alauddin Ahmad* (1435-1457) reduced Konkan, carried on the traditional war with Vijayanagar in which he was generally successful and defeated the Sultan of Khandesh who had made an attack on Berar. Though a stern ruler, Alauddin was a patron of learning and architecture. His successor *Humayun* (1457-1460) was a fierce tyrant and was known as *Zalim* or oppressor. During the reign of his minor son and successor *Nizam Shah* (1461-1463) the Bahmani kingdom was exposed to attacks led by the Hindu rulers of Orissa and Telingana as well as by Sultan Mahmud Khilji of Malwa.

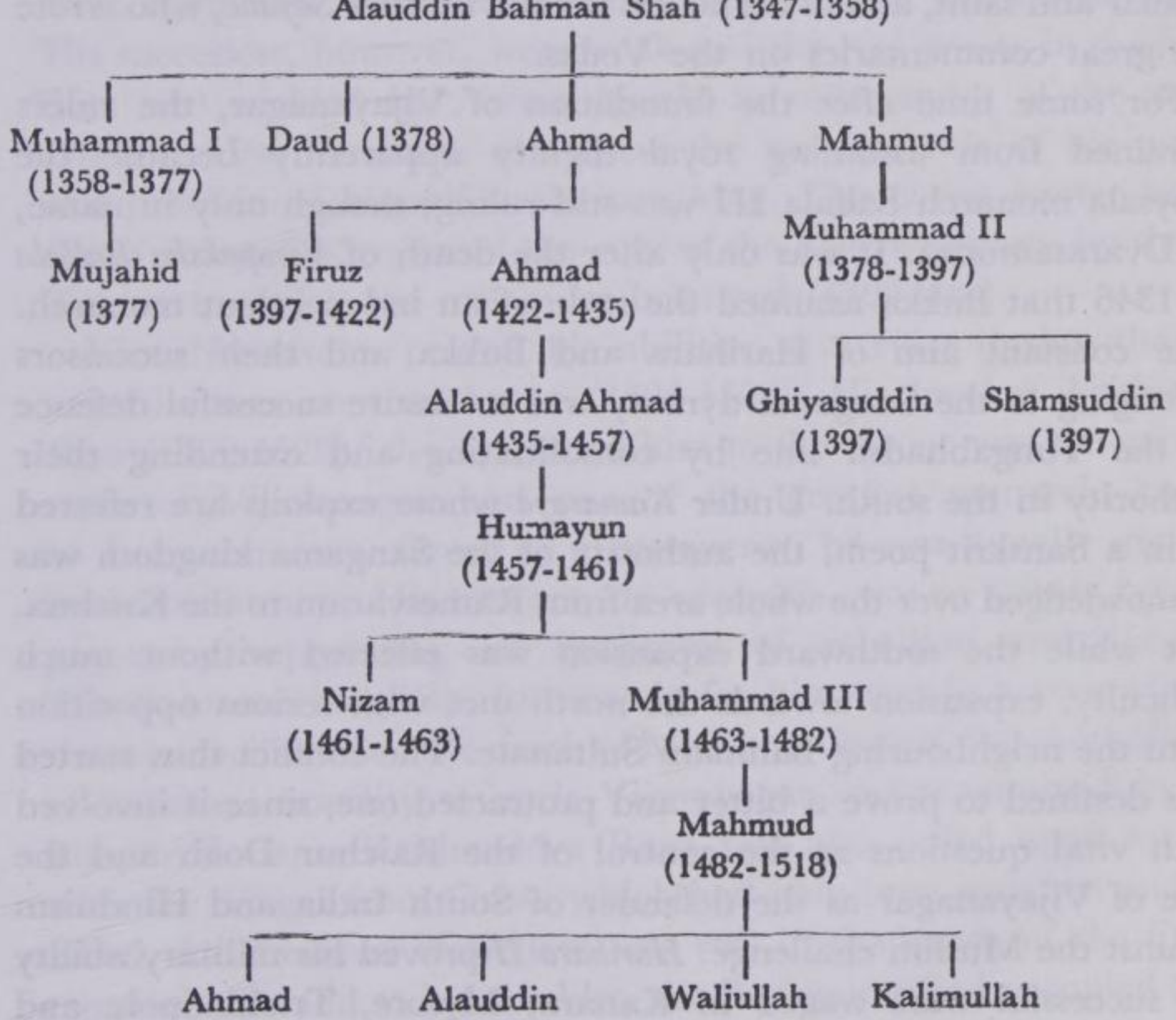
For some time past a serious internal trouble had been brewing in the Bahmani kingdom owing to acute rivalry between the Deccani and the foreign Amirs in the service of the Sultan. Fortunately during the reign of *Nizam Shah* and his successor *Muhammad Shah III* (1463-1482), *Khwaja Mahmud Gawan*, the leader of the 'foreigners' acted as the chief adviser. Gawan proved his singular ability in the spheres of both administration and warfare. Himself a learned man he was a patron of scholars. He built a magnificent college at Bidar and equipped it with a library enormously rich in its collection. He reduced the remaining Hindu chiefs of Konkan, captured Goa, led successful expeditions against Orissa and the Andhra country. He also directed raids against Vijayanagar in course of which the city of Kanchi was pillaged. In spite of his success Gawan could not save himself against court intrigues. The Deccanis were jealous of him. They poisoned the ears of the Sultan who was rash enough to order his dismissal and execution (1481). Gawan's death was an irreparable loss. 'With him,' as Meadows Taylor observes, 'departed all the cohesion and power of the Bahmani kingdom.'

The death of Gawan ushered in a period of steady decline in the fortunes and prestige of the Bahmani Sultanate. *Mahmud Shah* (1482-1518) who succeeded Muhammad Shah III was utterly incompetent. The provincial governors lost no time in taking advantage of the perceptibly growing weakness of the government for self-aggrandisement. Within a short interval of each other they severed connection with the government of Gulbarga and proclaimed

independence. Thus by the first decade of the sixteenth century the erstwhile Bahmani kingdom was split up into four independent units, viz. Bijapur (1490), Ahmadnagar (1490), Berar (1490) and Golconda (1512), ruled over respectively by the Adil Shahi, Nizam Shahi, Imad Shahi and Qutb Shahi dynasties. The authority of the Bahmani Sultan was severely confined to the region of Bidar.

Looking at the history of the Bahmani kingdom over a period of one hundred and seventy-five years of its existence, one is likely to be amazed by the intrigues and wars which characterised it. In the scramble for power five Sultans were murdered, three were dethroned and two were blinded. The mass of the people was very poor, though the country was rich in resources. Wealth was concentrated in a few hands and no attempt was made by the rulers, who frittered away their resources in extravagant warfare, to improve the condition of the people. As the Russian merchant-traveller Athanasius Nikitin (1470) wrote of Bidar: 'The land is overstocked with people; but

Genealogical Table of the Bahmani Sultans



those in the country are very miserable, whilst the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury.' What is said of Bidar is true of other parts of the kingdom.

The Kingdom of Vijayanagar

The foundations of the hiştoric kingdom of Vijayanagar were laid in the years of trouble and turmoil which marked the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlak. According to traditional accounts the city of Vijayanagar was founded on the southern bank of the Tungabhadra by the five sons of Sangama two of whom—Harihara and Bukka—took the leading part. Sangama and his sons were, in all probability, in the service of the Hoysalas whose rule extended over areas, including Anegundi, situated on the Tungabhadra. This city formed the nucleus of the later Vijayanagar kingdom. It is possible, therefore, that Harihara and Bukka founded their kingdom in the region formerly belonging to the Hoysalas at a time when the Hoysala power was in a state of chronic decline. In the work of founding a new kingdom the two brothers are said to have been largely guided by the advice of *Madhava Vidyaranya*, the celebrated scholar and saint, and of his no less famous brother *Sayana*, who wrote the great commentaries on the Vedas.

For some time after the foundation of Vijayanagar, the rulers refrained from assuming royal dignity apparently because the Hoysala monarch Ballala III was still ruling, though only in name, at Dvarasamudra. It was only after the death of *Virupaksha Ballala* in 1346 that Bukka assumed the style of an independent monarch. The constant aim of Harihara and Bukka and their successors belonging to the Sangama dynasty was to ensure successful defence of the Tungabhadra line by consolidating and extending their authority in the south. Under *Kamaraya* whose exploits are referred to in a Sanskrit poem, the authority of the Sangama kingdom was acknowledged over the whole area from Ramesvaram to the Krishna. But while the southward expansion was effected without much difficulty, expansion towards the north met with serious opposition from the neighbouring Bahmani Sultanate. The conflict thus started was destined to prove a bitter and protracted one, since it involved such vital questions as the control of the Raichur Doab and the role of Vijayanagar as the defender of South India and Hinduism against the Muslim challenge. *Harihara II* proved his military ability by successful wars waged in Kanara, Mysore, Trichinopoly and

Chingleput regions. But his successor *Bukka II* suffered reverses at the hands of the Bahmani Sultan Firuz Shah while attempting to extend his sway over the region between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra.

His successors, *Deva Raya I* (1406-1422), *Vira Vijaya* and *Deva Raya II* (1422-1446), carried on the struggle with the Bahmanis but failed to win success. The last-named ruler was, however, able to reform the administration and reorganise the army so as to make it better fitted to meet the adversaries.

The successors of Deva Raya II were weak and in consequence a period of trouble and confusion set in. The Bahmani Sultan and the ruler of Orissa took advantage of this to renew their hostilities in a more determined manner. From this state of trouble the kingdom was, however, rescued by *Narasimha Saluva*, the chieftain of Chandragiri, who, encouraged by his success, deposed *Virupaksha II*, the last of the Sangama rulers and seized the throne (1486 A.D.).

This act, known as the *First Usurpation*, brought a new dynasty, viz. that of the *Saluvas*, into power. Narasimha ruled only for six years (1486-1492), but even during this short period he was able to recover most of the areas lost to the Bahmani and Orissa rulers. His successors, however, were weak and the real power in the kingdom was wielded by *Narasa Nayaka* as commander of the army. His son *Vira Narasimha* overthrew the nominal rule of his master and proclaimed himself as the new king. This event, known as the *Second Usurpation*, replaced the rule of the Saluva dynasty by that of Tuluva to which the new ruler belonged (1505 A.D.).

Vira Narasimha proved his abilities as a ruler during the five years he was on the throne (1504-1509). His brother *Krishnadeva Raya* (1509-1529) who succeeded him to the throne was the greatest ruler of Vijayanagar and one of the greatest monarchs known to Indian history. Great as a conqueror, he was equally great as an administrator. His first act, on accession, was to restore internal peace by suppressing all symptoms of rebellion and disorder. The Bahmani kingdom, fortunately for him, was in a state of continuous decline since the death of Mahmud Gawan. But the tradition of Bahmani hostility towards Vijayanagar was maintained by the Bijapur Sultans. Krishnadeva Raya was also called upon to deal with the danger from Orissa which had only been scotched and not killed, for the area of Nellore was still in the hands of the Orissa monarch. To add to his troubles, the Portuguese had occupied Goa.

Krishnadeva Raya, however, boldly faced the situation. He undertook a series of military operations in course of which he suppressed several refractory chiefs in Mysore, recovered the Raichur Doab, advanced as far as Waltair and compelled the ruler of Orissa to conclude peace with him by requiring him to give his daughter in marriage to him (Krishnadeva Raya) and settling the boundaries between the two kingdoms. He also inflicted a defeat on the Sultan of Bijapur when the latter made an attempt to regain the Raichur Doab. He even carried the war into the heart of the Bijapur kingdom and pillaged the fortress-city of Gulbarga. As a result of these exploits his kingdom reached the farthest limits of its territorial expansion, extending as far as the South Konkan in the west, Vizagapatam in the east and the extremity of the Indian peninsula in the south. His authority seems to have been acknowledged also in several islands of the Indian Ocean.

Krishnadeva Raya's success as an administrator was equally remarkable. He maintained peace and order, enforced strict compliance with the laws and practised religious toleration. Himself an accomplished scholar he extended liberal patronage to men of learning. His work *Amuktamalyada* is considered to be a classic. His court is said to have been adorned by a galaxy of learned men, known as *Asta diggajas*, or the eight supports of the world of Telugu literature. He was also a great builder and erected many splendid mansions and temples in the new town of Nagalapur which was built under his patronage. He maintained friendly relations with the Portuguese and permitted them to erect a fort at Bhatkal. The extraordinary qualities of Krishnadeva Raya as a man and ruler are attested as follows in the words of the Portuguese traveller Domingos Paes: 'He is the most learned and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry; he is one that seeks to honour foreigners and receives them kindly, asking all about the affairs whatever their condition may be. He is a great ruler and a man of justice, but for certain fits of rage....He is by rank a greater lord than any, by reason of what he possesses in armies and territories; but it seems that he has, in fact, nothing compared to what a amn like him ought to have, so gallant and perfect is he in all things.'

Krishnadeva Raya's death was followed by a period of decline. *Achyuta Raya* who succeeded him was lacking in vigour and initiative. The next ruler *Sadasiva* left the affairs and policy of the state to be

guided by his minister Rama Raya. He adopted the dangerous and mistaken policy of interfering in the affairs of the neighbouring Muslim states. Thus he formed an alliance with the Sultan of Bijapur and Golconda against the ruler of Ahmadnagar. He ravaged the latter's territory in course of which his armies are said to have desecrated several mosques. This unjust and provocative act impelled the Muslim rulers to make up their quarrels and combine against Vijayanagar. The outcome was the battle of *Talikota* (Raksas-Tagdi) fought on January 23, 1565, between the armies of Vijayanagar on the one hand and the combined troops of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda and Bidar. The battle ended in the defeat of the Vijayanagar troops and the capture and death of Rama Raya. The victorious Muslim army entered the city of Vijayanagar and carried out such wanton plunder and destruction that Sewell observes: 'Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been brought and wrought so suddenly on so splendid a city.'

The battle of Talikota was a great but not a finishing blow to the kingdom of Vijayanagar. Rama Raya's brother *Tirumala* removed the capital to Penugonda. The dynasty which he founded, after overthrowing the nominal ruler Sadasiva (*the Third Usurpation*), is known as the *Aravidu dynasty*. His successors *Ranga II* and *Venkata II* retained their hold on such ancestral dominions as Tirumala had left. The last notable ruler of the dynasty was *Ranga III* who had to face renewed attacks by the Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda and internal rebellions headed by a number of refractory chiefs and subordinate officers like those of Srirangapattam, Bednore, Madura and Tanjore. Gradually the great kingdom split into a number of small independent units ruled over by local princely families. The decline of the empire was complete within a little over half a century since the battle of Talikota.

The Vijayanagar Kingdom in Retrospect

The kingdom of Vijayanagar was largely the outcome of South India's determination to save its cultural and political integrity against the threat of Muslim domination. During its active existence of a little over two centuries and a quarter it never forgot this historic mission and served as an effective centre and citadel of Indian culture and civilisation. A fairly large number of its rulers were liberal patrons of cultural and artistic activities. They encouraged not only the cultivation of Sanskrit but also promoted the growth of

vernacular literature like Telugu and Tamil. They were also responsible for the construction of a number of great temples, some of which are regarded as perfect specimens of mediaeval Indian architecture.

The king of Vijayanagar, like all contemporary rulers, was an autocrat with unfettered authority in matters civil, judicial and military. But the inherent evil of this despotism was to a large extent tempered by the desire of the king to promote the welfare of the people under his charge and to conform to the principles of *Dharma*. The king was assisted by a body of ministers some of whom are known to have held office by hereditary right. The kingdom was divided into a number of provinces, each of which was ruled by a governor known as the *Nayak*. The village was the lowest administrative unit. As in ancient times, the villages had their assemblies composed of representatives empowered to administer the functions of self-government at the village level. One of the evils of the administrative system was the high rate at which land revenue was assessed. It was often collected at the rate of nine-tenths of the produce of the soil. This reduced the general mass of the people to a state of abject poverty, though there was no dearth of wealthy persons and splendid cities in the kingdom.

The Vijayanagar kingdom had necessarily to maintain a large army. The Portuguese traveller Paes informs us that Krishnadeva Raya's army consisted of 700,000 infantry, 32,600 cavalry and 600 elephants, in addition to a large but undetermined number of camp-followers. The use of artillery was also known.

A number of foreign travellers who visited Vijayanagar have left interesting and valuable accounts of their impressions about the kingdom—its king, court and capital. Their writings also throw interesting light on the social and economic condition in which the people of the kingdom lived. About 1420 A.D. an Italian traveller named *Nicolo Conti* visited Vijayanagar. He gives a detailed account of the city and says that its circumference was 96 kilometres, protected with massive walls. He gives the additional information that 'in the city there are estimated to be ninety thousand men fit to bear arms.' *Abdur Razzaq*, the Persian envoy who visited the kingdom in 1442-43, speaks of chambers in the king's treasury filled with masses of molten gold. The inhabitants of the country, both high and low, wore, according to him, 'jewels and gilt ornaments in their ears and around their necks, arms, wrists and fingers'.

In recording his impressions about the splendour of the city he writes: 'The city of Vijayanagar is such that the eye has not seen nor ear heard of any place resembling it upon the whole earth. It is so built that it has seven fortified walls, one within the other.' He writes further: 'The country is so well-populated that it is impossible, in a reasonable space, to convey an idea of it.' The Portuguese traveller *Paes* writes in the same strain about the city. He says: 'This is the best provided city in the world, and is stocked with provisions such as rice, wheat, grains, Indian corn, a certain amount of barley and beans, moong, pulses, horse-grain and many other seeds. . . .The streets and markets are full of laden oxen without count.' He informs his reader that in the city they would find men belonging to every nation and people, because of its voluminous trade. *Edoardo Barbosa* who came in 1516 confirms the information gleaned from earlier accounts, as he says that 'the city was of a great extent, highly populous and the seat of an active commerce in country-diamonds, rubies from Pegu, silk of China and Alexandria, and cinnabar, camphor, musk, pepper and sandal from Malabar.'

Agriculture was in a flourishing condition. The government undertook various irrigation projects which gave an incentive to the growth and expansion of agriculture. Industry, too, made considerable progress, the main industries being textile, mining and metallurgy. One of the minor industries was perfumery. Trade also attained a high level of progress. Abdur Razzaq informs us that the kingdom possessed 300 sea-ports, the most important among them being Calicut on the Malabar coast. There was active commercial intercourse between the kingdom of Vijayanagar and the islands of the Indian Ocean, the Malay Archipelago, and also Burma, China Arabia, Persia, Abyssinia and even Portugal. The principal items of export were cloth, rice, iron, saltpetre, sugar and spices. Imported articles mainly consisted of copper, coral, mercury, China silk and velvet.

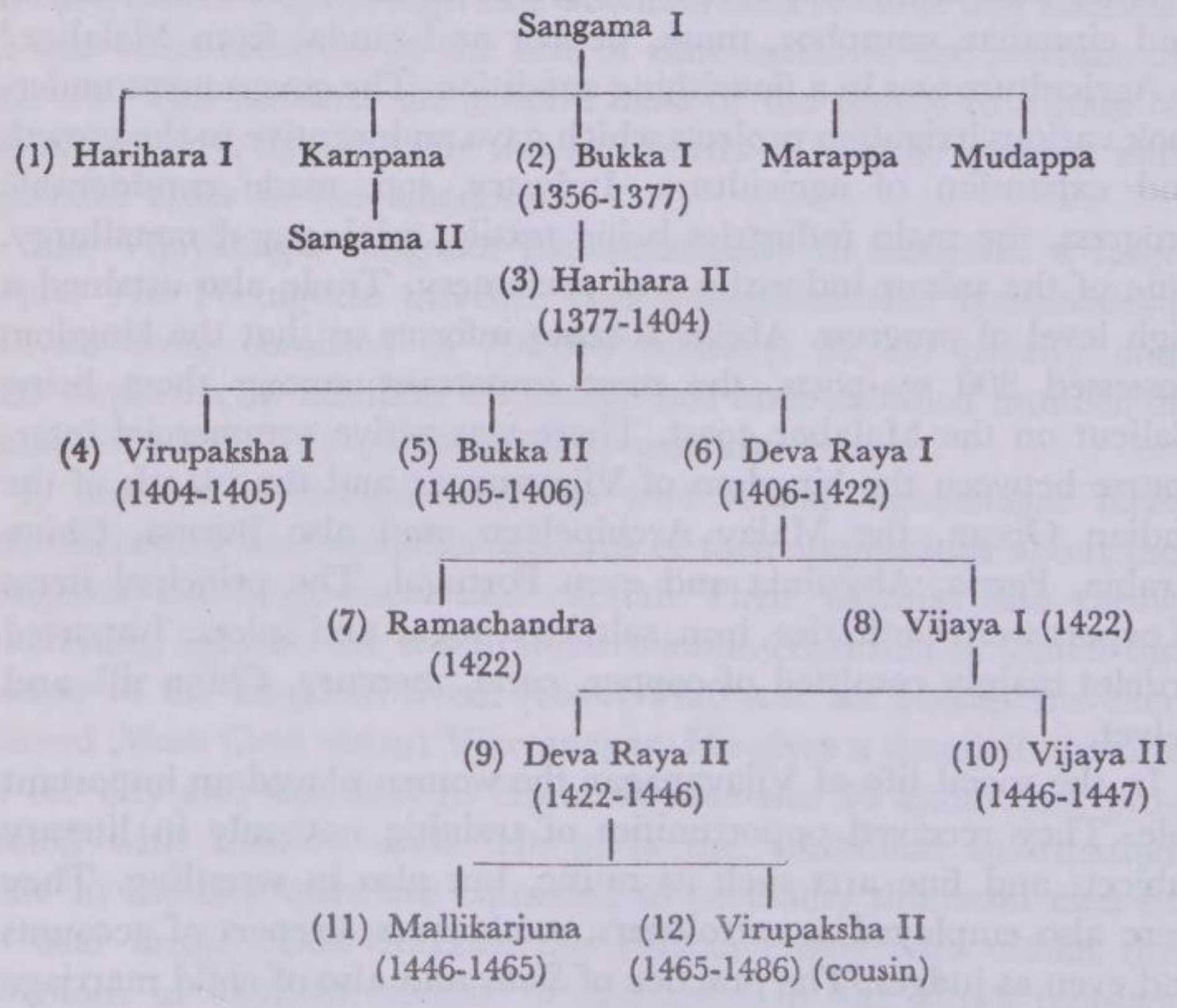
In the social life of Vijayanagar the women played an important role. They received opportunities of training not only in literary subjects and fine arts such as music, but also in wrestling. They were also employed as astrologers, soothsayers, keepers of accounts and even as judges. The practice of *Suttee* and also of child marriage was widely prevalent. The Brahmans, as of old, held a place of honour in the society. Sacrifices to gods were often offered to the accompaniment of animal slaughter. It appears from the account of

the foreign travellers that there was no undue or rigid restrictions on the choice of food.

The rulers of Vijayanagar practised religious toleration. Whatever their personal religion, they extended equal treatment to all their subjects, irrespective of faith and colour. As Barbosa, who visited the court of Krishnadeva Raya, wrote: 'The king allows such freedom that every man may come and go and live according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance, and without enquiries whether he is a Christian, Jew, Moor or Hindu.' There is reason to believe that in this respect Krishnadeva Raya was not an exception.

Genealogical Tables of the Vijayanagar Dynasties

1. THE SANGAMA DYNASTY



2. THE SALUVA DYNASTY

(1) Narasimha (1485-1490)

(2) Timma (1490-1491)

Immadi Narasimha (1491-1503)

3. THE TULUVA DYNASTY

(1) Narasa Nayaka (1490-1503)

(2) Vira Narasimha (1504-1509)

(3) Krishna Deva Raya (1509-1529)

Ranga — Sadasiva (1543-1569)

Achyuta (1530-1542)

4. THE ARAVIDU DYNASTY

Ranga I

Rama Raja — Ranga IV — Pedda Venkata; Chinna Venkata — Ranga VI

Tirumala — Raghu; Ranga II; Rama — Tirumala; Ranga III — Rama; Venkata II

Venkatadri — Ranga V — Gopala

CHAPTER TWENTY

SULTANATE IN RETROSPECT

Administration: The Sultanate of Delhi, like all Muslim states, was a theocracy and all its institutions and civil laws were derived, at least in theory, from Muslim canon laws. Under this system the ruler is regarded as God himself and the priests are considered as the promulgators and expounders of the divine commands. In practice, however, this theocratic character of the Muslim government had to be modified in the context of the fact that the vast majority of the people living under the Sultanate were non-Muslims. Thus the original Muslim legal concept that the Sultan derived his authority from God and that the sanction of sovereignty was election by the faithful could not be given effect to in entirety. In practice, the sovereign in the Sultanate ruled either by right of conquest or by right of heredity or by right of being chosen by the nobility. The prevalent theory that the Caliph was 'the fountain-head of all political authority; kings and tribal chiefs were subordinate to him, and his sanction alone could provide a legal basis for their power' was observed more in its breach. No doubt many of the Muslim rulers since the days of Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori, like Sultan Iltutmish, Muhammad bin Tughlak and Firuz Shah, sought the sanction of their authority from the contemporary Caliphs but there were also rulers like Alauddin Khilji and the successors of Firoz Shah who did not consider it necessary to seek confirmation of their royal position from 'the sacred throne of the Caliph'. The ascendancy of the Ulema was no doubt perceptible. Under their influence 'the extirpation of idolatry, the extinction of every form of dissent from the accepted dogma, the conversion of the infidel pupulation—these came to be looked upon as the functions of an ideal Muslim state.' But the ascendancy of the privileged class of the Ulema did not remain unchallenged. Both Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad bin Tughlak repudiated their allegiance to the orthodox priestly class. After the failure of Timur's project of winning Hindustan to the cause of Islam no serious attempt was made to set up a *dar-ul-Islam* in India till the days of Emperor Aurangzeb.

The Sultan at the head of the state was Caesar and Pope combined in one. He was the supreme executive authority which knew no limitation except that derived from the concept of a theocratic state

and the practical need to retain the support and good will of the nobility and to some extent of the priestly classes. The government of the Sultan was essentially a military despotism conditioned by the fact of a minority community ruling over a population the bulk of which remained unreconciled to its authority. The support of a strong army was thus an essential condition for the working of the Sultan's government.

Theoretically an autocrat, the Sultan's authority was, in practice, limited by the power exercised by the over-mighty barons. Strong rulers like Iltutmish, Balban and Alauddin Khilji had no doubt curbed their power and brought them under the effective control of the Sultan's authority. But as a general rule the pretensions of the nobility remained a serious obstacle to the exercise of absolute power by the Sultan. Instances of Sultans being made and unmade by the nobility are by no means negligible.

The Sultan was helped in the discharge of his functions by a body of ministers whose number varied from time to time. In the early days of the Sultanate the usual number of ministers was four, viz. the Wazir, the Ariz-i-mamalik, the Diwan-i-insha and the Diwan-i-rasalat. At a later stage Sadr-us-sudur and Diwani-i-quza were added to the list of ministers. The *Wazir* or the chief minister stood 'midway between the sovereign and his subjects'. He appointed important officers, maintained a supervisory control over the working of the administration and deputised for the Sultan in case of his illness or absence from the capital. The *ariz-i-mamalik* and the *diwani-i-insha* were in respective charges of the army and the royal correspondence. The fourth minister, *diwan-i-rasalat*, looked after foreign affairs and diplomatic relations. The two other later additions to the ministry, viz. *Sadr-us-sudur* and *Diwani-i-quza*, were entrusted with the duty of presiding over religious endowments and the judicial department. The ministers gave advice to the Sultan when asked for, but their advice was not necessarily binding on the Sultan. It was also customary for the Sultan to consult a body of officials and non-officials, known as the *Majlis-i-khalwat*. The Sultan was free to accept or reject the opinion of this advisory body, like that of the ministers. There were officers of subordinate rank, like *Barid-i-mamalik* and *Diwani-i-mustakhraj*, who looked after the working of the intelligence and postal departments and the realisation of arrears due from defaulters. Among other departmental heads were the *Wakil-i-dar* and *Amir-i-hajib*, who

acted respectively as the head of the royal household and the chief chamberlain.

The main source of the state's income was land revenue which generally averaged one-fifth of the total produce, though sometimes it was as high as one-half. Other sources of income were the *Zakat* or religious taxes, *Jiziyah* or poll-tax payable by the non-Muslims, income from mines and treasure-troves, heirless property, customs and excise duties and the spoils of war.

The department of justice was regarded as 'the weakest and the most ill-organised department of the Sultan's administration'. The Sultan was, in theory, the head of the department of justice. The only law he was required to uphold was the law as prescribed in the Holy Quran. In deciding questions of religious import, the Sultan was assisted by the *Sadr-us-sudur* and the *Mufti*. In regard to disputes over secular matters the Sultan sought the expert opinion of the *Qazi-ul-quzat*. When the Sultan was unable to hold court himself, as was very often the case, the chief Qazi heard appeals from the lower courts and administered final justice. A high official designated as *Amir-i-dad* enforced the sentences passed by the chief Qazi and his subordinates and was required to apprehend criminals. There was a Qazi in every province and one in every district. No royal officer seems to have been entrusted with judicial duties in the villages. In cases where the Hindus alone were concerned, the *panchayat* continued to function.

A serious weakness of the judicial system under the Sultanate was that it failed to provide for any proper grading of the courts with clearly demarcated jurisdiction. Moreover, no attempt was made towards the establishment of a uniform judicial procedure throughout the country. The penal laws were unduly severe. Mutilation and even death were often awarded in dealing with ordinary offences. The accused, as a rule, did not enjoy the right of being represented by vakils or counsels. The trial was of a summary character and the proceedings of the court were never committed to writing.

The army constituted the mainstay and support of the Sultanate. A large and efficient army was the best guarantee of the Sultan's authority. During most of the period the army consisted of four distinct categories, viz. (1) regular troops enlisted in the Sultan's army, (2) troops maintained by the provincial government, (3) irregular troops recruited to meet emergencies of war, and (4) Muslim volunteers raised for fighting the *jihad* or holy war. Alauddin Khilji

was the first among the Delhi Sultans to institute what may be called a standing army directly recruited and maintained by the central government. In the regular army the cavalry was given the pride of place. The *Payaks* or the foot soldiers were equipped with swords, spears, bows and arrows. Though numerically superior, they were given an inferior position in the hierarchy. Elephants were a recognised unit in the army. Fire-arms in rudimentary form were in use. The military officers were usually given assignment of land revenue; the individual soldiers were, however, paid in cash.

The weakness of the army under the Sultanate was derived from the fact that it was not a national army, being recruited from diverse clans, tribes and nationalities. It was, as such, lacking in homogeneity.

Administration in the provinces under the Delhi Sultanate did not conform to any uniform pattern. It varied from province to province. During the rule of the so-called Slave dynasty the empire was divided into a number of *Iqtas* or military fiefs. Alauddin Khilji added to the *Iqtas* provincial units into which the newly conquered areas were reduced. The military officer in charge of an *Iqta* was known as a *Muqti* while the officers placed in charge of the newly set up provincial units were called either *Walis* or *Amirs*. They were required to maintain peace and order within their jurisdiction, exercise supervisory authority over the subordinate officers, protect the Ulema, collect revenue, keep an account of their income and expenditure and above all, maintain an army establishment adequate for keeping the province or *Iqta* under effective control. So long as powerful and vigorous monarchs presided over the centre the provincial government was kept under control but the presence of a weak ruler on the throne of Delhi invariably encouraged the provincial chiefs to take on the airs of a *de facto* sovereign. The Delhi Sultanate failed to evolve a system of provincial government which would remain unaffected by the character and personality of the Sultan ruling in Delhi.

Next to the province or *Iqta* the administrative unit was the *Shiqq* whose officer-in-charge was designated as the Shiqqdar. The next lower unit was the *Pargana* which consisted of a number of villages, grouped together into one administrative unit. The lowest unit was the village where the old institutions of local government, notably the *Panchayat*, managed to survive. Besides these, there were areas under the rule of vassal chiefs who were mainly Hindus. Their allegiance to the central government was little more than nominal.

Social and Economic Conditions: Muslim mediaeval society was based

on the theory that the Muslims of right enjoyed the status of a privileged order. They constituted the ruling class, and nearly monopolised all offices in the gift of the state. In the beginning the Turk enjoyed primacy among the nobility; at a later stage the Afghan usurped the position. Neither of them was willing to treat the Indian Muslims on a level of equality. In the beginning this class of non-Indian Muslims was a body of sturdy warriors, vigorous in habits and warlike in disposition. But gradually they lost these qualities and tended to degenerate into a body of self-seeking fortune-hunters and weak pleasure-loving creatures. The infusion of non-Turkish Muslim elements from Central Asia, intermarriages and long association with the Indian Muslims tended to break up the monopoly enjoyed by a small privileged order, but the Muslims, generally speaking, irespective of their racial origin, continued to enjoy a dominant position in the society and government. The Hindus who formed the bulk of the population were relegated to a position of marked inferiority. They were known as *Zimmis* or people living under guarantees. Any attempt to keep the non-Muslims in a state of perpetual degradation elicited the highest praise from the Muslim divines. An Egyptian exponent of Muslim law congratulated the anti-Hindu legislations of Alauddin in the following words: 'I have heard...that you have degraded the Hindus to such an extent that their wives and children beg their bread at the doors of the Muslims. You are, in doing so, rendering a great service to religion.' Such a view represented the average attitude of a mediaeval canonist to the infidels. Barani gives a vivid account of abject poverty and dependence to which the Hindus as a class were reduced in the days of Alauddin Khilji. The position of the non-Muslims slightly improved in the days of the rule of the later Khiljis. Speaking of the times of Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah, Barani lamented the fact that 'the Hindus again found pleasure and happiness and were beside themselves with joy.' The policy of deliberate oppression of the non-Muslims was, however, revived in the days of Sultan Firoz Shah who imposed the *Jiziyah* on the Brahmins, hitherto exempted from its payment. Sikandar Lodi too presecuted those of his subjects whose only fault was that they professed a religion different from that of the Sultan.

A glimpse into the social life of India in the fourteenth century is provided by Ibn Batuta. The Ulemas, as a class, lost their veneration for learning and the Maulvis and Sheikhs were often found guilty of misconduct. With the accumulation of wealth, religion tended to

lose its hold on the people. Superstition and heresy were steadily on the increase. Slavery was common, though the practice of manumission was generally encouraged. Slave girls were in great demand. Liquor was freely indulged in, though rulers like Alauddin Khilji had attempted to restrict its use. *Suttee* seems to have been more widely prevalent in the Deccan than in Northern India. If Ibn Batuta is to be believed, *Suttee* rites could not be performed except with the king's permission. Caste continued to dominate the Hindu society and even showed a tendency to become more rigid than before.

India's reputation as a land of fabulous wealth from early times survived throughout the mediaeval period and even for some time into the beginning of the modern period. The main source of her wealth was agriculture and the proverbial fertility of her soil. Food was, generally speaking, grown in abundance, permitting a favourable balance of export trade. Industries too did not lag much behind. State-owned industries prospered side by side with private sector industries. The Sultans owned their own workshops in which many thousand of workers were employed. Textile, mining and metallurgical industries were in a flourishing condition. Bengal and Gujarat were famous for the excellent qualities of their textile products. Trade too was enormous. India under the Turko-Afghan rulers had extensive trade relations with China, the Malay islands, islands in the Pacific Ocean as well as with Central and West Asian countries.

The economic prosperity, however, did not reach beyond a certain level, for wealth was not evenly distributed and the ruling authorities neglected to devise a comprehensive plan for general economic development of the country as a whole. Wealth continued to be concentrated in the hands of the few. The Sultan, the nobility, the high officials, Rajas and the local chieftains rolled in wealth; but the lot of the common man was depressing and never above want. He was oppressed with a heavy burden of taxation. The tiller of the soil had to remain content with only one-third of the actual produce of his labour. Famines, mostly caused by failure of rains or some other natural calamity, though not frequent, were not unknown. Acute shortage of food owing to famines is known to have caused immense suffering to the people once in the days of Sultan Jalaluddin Firoz and again during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak.

The middle class was generally well off. They comprised the professional classes, state and private employees and the merchants.

In spite of the sufferings and limited means of the common man he did not live on the verge of starvation since the prices of essential commodities generally tended to be cheap. Alauddin Khilji made the bold experiment of regulating the market price. His regulations did not operate throughout the country, but in the areas where they were enforced, prices of essential commodities were moderate and within the reach of the common man. We are told that in his days wheat used to sell at seven and a half *jitals* per maund, rice and pulses at 5 jitals, barley at 4 jitals and oil seeds at 3 jitals a maund. Fine qualities of muslin cost 17 *tankas* a piece. It has been estimated that prices of commodities were so low that a soldier with one horse could live comfortably with less than 20 *tankas* a month. The economic reforms of Sultan Alauddin did not survive him. Prices went up in the reign of his successors. But in the days of the Tughlaks, especially in the reign of Firoz Shah, prices tended to be cheap once again. Ibn Batuta speaks of economic prosperity and abundance of all necessities of life. During the reigns of Sikandar and Ibrahim Lodi commodities were sold at cheap rates.

Art and Architecture: The art of Muslim India is generally described as Indo-Saracenic in that it was the outcome of the joint Hindu and Muslim styles and techniques of architecture. It is, however, difficult to ascertain the extent of the two influences. What is clear is that 'with the coming of Islam, India and the west were again brought nearer and the new impact, instead of extinguishing Indian architectural traditions, opened the way for the infusion of new energies and new architectural aspirations.' The reaction of Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture on each other was inevitable mainly because of two factors—firstly, the Muslim rulers in the construction of their buildings and mosques made extensive use of the materials of the Hindu temples they had destroyed, and secondly, the Muslim sovereigns had to enlist the services of Indian artists and architects, as Muslim artists and craftsmen had not accompanied the Muslim armies to India in sufficiently large numbers. At a later stage the Delhi Sultans imported Persian artists, conversant with and long accustomed to their own techniques, with the result that Persian and Indian styles reacted on each other and led to a new and distinctive type of architecture in Muslim India. But Muslim architecture of the Delhi Sultanate did not conform to one uniform style. Its pattern varied from province to province to suit the personal taste of their promoters or the needs of religion and of local conditions. Thus Delhi,

Bijapur, Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa and Gujarat developed their own pattern and style of architecture marked by peculiarities of their own.

The Indo-Saracenic style of architecture had its most spectacular achievement in Delhi. The earliest specimen of Delhi architecture was the *Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque* founded by Qutbuddin Aibak in 1193. It was built out of materials of a number of demolished Hindu and Jain temples. It had thus a distinctly Indian character to which were subsequently added the elements of Muslim architecture. The most remarkable achievement of Delhi architecture was the *Qutb Minar*. In the opinion of Marshall: 'Nothing certainly could be more imposing or more fittingly symbolic of Muslim power than the stern and stupendous fabric; nor could anything be more exquisite than its rich but restrained carvings.' Among other notable buildings of the period were the *Jama'at Khana Masjid* at the *Dargah* of Nizamuddin Auliya and the *Alai Darwaza* at the Qutb Minar. The former has been described as 'the earliest example in India of a mosque built wholly in accordance with Muhammedan ideas.' Alauddin built the new city of *Siri* and the *Hauzi-Khas* tank.

The Tughlak architecture, compared with that of the Khilji, was more sober and less decorative almost to the point of austerity. This change in technique was due to the influence of religious orthodoxy displayed by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlak and his successor as well as to the comparatively lean finances. The tomb built by Ghiyas-uddin Tughlak for himself reveals in its design a striking quality of simple dignity. Firoz Shah was a great builder of cities, gardens and works of public utility.

The Sayyids and the Lodis attempted to restore to architecture the life and vigour which had departed from it since the days of Tughlaksahi rule. But the attempt only partly succeeded, for they were unable 'to shake off the deadening effect of the Tughlak period'.

The main centres of provincial architecture, in many respects different from the architectural pattern followed in Delhi, were Multan, Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur. The earliest specimen of architecture in Multan is a mosque built by Muhammad bin Qasim; the most well-known, however, is the tomb of Rukn-i-Alam built by Ghiyasuddin Tughlak which is considered 'one of the most splendid memorials ever erected in the honour of the dead'.

Bengal architecture of the period was marked by peculiarities of its own. Its buildings, being built of bricks, have survived only in ruins. The earliest specimens of Bengal's mediaeval architecture are

the tomb and mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi at Tribeni. Another notable building is the *Adina Mosque* built at Pandua in the second half of the fourteenth century under orders of Sikandar Shah. Marshall describes it as 'the most ambitious structure of its kind ever essayed in Eastern India'. Ruins of splendid monuments have also been discovered at Gaur. The *Dakhil Darwaza*, for instance, is regarded as 'as perfect an example of brick structure as can be found anywhere in the world'. Other important achievements of Bengal architecture are the *Bara Sona Masjid*, *Chotta Sona Masjid* and *Qadam Rasul Mosque*. The common feature of these monuments is 'the use of pointed arches on short pillars and the Muslim's adaptation of the traditional Hindu temple style of curvilinear cornices copied from the bamboo structures, and of beautifully carved Hindu symbolic decorative designs like the lotus.'

The best patterns of provincial architecture belong to Gujarat which had already earned fame on account of excellent progress in architecture attained by the Hindu and Jain artists and architects of the pre-Muslim days. The Sultans freely utilised the skill of the local artists in planning and executing their architectural projects. The most famous specimen of Gujarat architecture is the *Jami Masjid* at Ahmedabad constructed under orders of Sultan Ahmad Shah. Another notable monument is the tomb of the same ruler. To the patronage of Sultan Mahmud Begarha the city of *Champaner* owes its magnificent achievements in architecture. The Gujarat style is said to combine 'all the beauty and finish of the native art with a certain magnificence which is deficient in their own works.'

Malwa too developed a distinctive architectural style of its own. The mosques of Dhara made with materials taken out of Hindu buildings are remarkable alike for their design and finish. Mandu too possesses a number of beautiful specimens of buildings such as the *Jami Masjid*, the *Hindola Mahal*, the *Jahaz Mahal* and the palaces of Baz Bahadur and Rupamati. 'Mandu,' writes Marshall, 'is of all the fortress-cities of India the most magnificent.'

Jaunpur also was noted for its architecture patronised by the Sultans of the Sharqi dynasty. The most well-known specimens of the Sharqi style are the *Atala Devi Masjid* and the *Jami Masjid* built respectively by Ibrahim Shah Sharqi and Husain Shah.

Traditional Indian architecture, uninfluenced by Islamic ideas, had its centre in the Indian states both south and north of the Vindhyas. *Mewar* could take legitimate pride in its grand pillar of

victory set by Maharana Kumbha in the capital city of Chitor. The numerous buildings erected by the kings of *Vijayanagar* are also superb specimens of contemporary Indian architecture. The famous *Vithala Temple* constructed by Krishnadeva Raya has been described by a competent critic as 'the finest building of its kind in Southern India'.

Literature and Learning: The Turko-Afghan rulers were primarily warrior kings but they did not neglect cultural pursuits. This is borne out by the patronage extended by them to artistic and literary activities. Amir Khasru claimed that due to the patronage of the Sultans Delhi had become a rival of Bukhara as a centre of intellectual activities. A large number of Persian scholars had arrived in Delhi from Central Asia for fear of persecution at the hands of the Mongols. The Sultan gave them shelter and patronage. The most celebrated scholar and littérateur of the age was *Amir Khasru*. His versatile and creative talents were revealed in a number of remarkable compositions in prose and verse. Another distinguished man of letters of the contemporary age was *Shaikh Nazim-ud-din Hasan*, popularly known as *Hasan-i-Dehlavi*. Barani informs us that during the reign of Alauddin Khilji there had gathered in Delhi such a galaxy of scholars and literary artists that the Indian capital became the intellectual competitor of Baghdad, the rival of Cairo and the equal of Constantinople. Muhammad bin Tughlak, himself an accomplished scholar, extended liberal patronage to poets and men of learning. Firoz Shah emulated the example of his predecessor with great success. Sikandar Lodi carried on the tradition and gave all possible encouragement to literary and scholarly pursuits. A fairly large number of provincial rulers are also known to have been liberal patrons of letters.

Historical literature was enriched during the rule of the Sultans by Mihaj-ud-din's *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Amir Khasru's *Tarikh-i-Alai*, Shams-i-siraj Afif's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* and Yahia bin Sarhindi's *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*.

Indian literature did not lag behind even though the era of Hindu rule was over. A number of scholars enriched Sanskrit literature with their compositions on a variety of subjects. The more well-known among them were Ramanuja, Partha Sarathi Mishra, Deva Suri, Jiva Goswami, Vijnaneswara, Jimutavahana, Jayadeva and Vachaspati Mishra. The Sannyasi teachers did much to promote the cause of vernacular literature. Hindi literature found great exponents in Chand Bardai, the author of *Prithviraja-Raso*, Sarangadhara who wrote *Hamir-Raso* and *Hamir-Kavya* and Jagnayaka who composed a

long poem, known as *Alhakanda*, dealing with the exploits of the two semi-legendary Banphar heroes, Alha and Udal. A very renowned name in literary circles was that of *Vidyapati* who enriched the Maithili literature and language with his brilliant songs and poems. Bengali, Marathi, Rajasthani and Gurumukhi language and literature too made considerable progress under the auspices of the great religious teachers and devotees like Sri Chaitanya, Namadeva and Eknath, Mirabai and Guru Nanak who preached and composed their songs in the language of the people among whom they lived and worked.

Bid for Understanding and Assimilation: For many years following the advent of the Muslims in India, no attempt at understanding and synthesis was made. If the Hindus were arrogant, as Alberuni describes them, the Muslims, full of the zeal of proselytism, were no less averse to any understanding or adjustment with the people among whom they had chosen to live. It was not till the end of the fourteenth century that there was a perceptible change in the respective attitudes of the two communities. After Timur's bid to win the land of idolatry to the cause of Islam had failed, the Muslims took a more realistic view of the situation. At about the same time the Hindus discarded their 'arrogance' or superiority complex and came round to the position that they must attempt to promote an atmosphere of good will and understanding. The two communities had lived side by side with each other long enough. A large number of Indian converts had found a place in the Muslim world of India. They brought with them ideas, customs and outlook which were an inheritance from the past. The Muslims had become disillusioned about the prospect of winning India to the cause of Islam no less than the Hindus had learnt to discard their superiority complex. As a modern writer observes: 'The arrogance of the Hindu was gone during the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that of the Muslim by the beginning of the fifteenth. Both were ready to meet each other, and both sat at the feet of masters like Kabir and Nanak to learn that their quarrels were futile and in the ultimate analysis the essence of all religions was but the same.' In the changed situation Sufi and Bhakti thought came into close contact and tended to coalesce at various points. Both shared the belief in the need to unite with God and both stressed love as the basis of relationship with God. The earliest exponent of the Bhakti cult was the celebrated Vaishnava teacher, *Ramanuja*. He regarded knowledge as one of the means and not the

primary means of salvation. Devotion, in his opinion, was a surer means of establishing relationship with God, the Incarnation of Love. *Ramananda*, who belonged to the Ramanuja school, was a great devotee of Rama. He preached the doctrine of Bhakti to people irrespective of castes. *Vallabhacharya*, a worshipper of Krishna, also preached the cause of religion based on love. One of the most famous representatives of the Bhakti cult was *Sri Chaitanya*. He preached that devotion to Krishna was a means of salvation and 'believed that through love and devotion, song and dance, a state of ecstasy could be produced in which the personal presence of God would be realised.' Another preacher of the Bhakti cult was *Namadeva* who chose Maharashtra for preaching his doctrine of love and devotion. The two most remarkable names in the list of the exponents of the Bhakti cult are those of *Kabir* and *Nanaka*. They equated the Hindu and Muslim ideas of God as identical. They did not preach an eclectic ideology; it would be more correct to say that 'they were leading a religious group in which God was not merely a remodelled version of the concept of Rama or of Allah, but a new concept.' This is evident from Kabir's song:

O servant, where dost thou seek Me:
Lo, I am beside thee.
I am neither in temple nor in mosque;
I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash;
Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor
in Yoga and renunciation.
If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt
at once see Me: thou shalt
meet Me in a moment of time.
Kabir says, 'O Sadhu, God is the
breath of all breath.

Nanak carried the concept a step further and spoke of God without reference to either Hindu or Muslim concepts:

The True One was in the beginning, the True One
was in the primal age,
The True One is now also, O Nanak, the
True One also shall be.
By His Order bodies are produced, His order
cannot be described.

By His order souls are infused into them,
By His order others must ever wander in transmigration
All are subject to His order; none is exempt from it.
He who understands God's order, O Nanak,
is never guilty of egoism.

PART III

MUGHAL INDIA

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

AFGHAN-MUGHAL CONTEST FOR EMPIRE

BABUR

Career in Central Asia: Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire in India, was a Chaghatai Turk.* He was descended from Timur in the direct male line, and through his mother he could claim descent from Chingiz Khan. His father, Umar Shaikh Mirza, ruled over Farghana. Babur was born at Farghana in February 1483. His father died in 1494, and he inherited his paternal principality at the tender age of eleven.

Babur showed remarkable precocity. His elder and younger paternal uncles died in quick succession; a scramble began for the possession of Samarqand, which he conquered in 1497—a victor hardly 15 years old. Not long afterwards Babur lost this capital of Central Asia, while he was preoccupied with the task of retaining his hold over Farghana. Soon he reconquered Samarqand, but this brought him into collision with Shaibani Khan, the rising Uzbeg chief, who defeated him in the battles of *Sar-i-Pul* and *Akhsi* and drove him from Samarqand and Farghana.

These defeats made Babur a wanderer, as he writes in his autobiography, 'moving from square to square like a king on a chessboard'. He succeeded in seizing Kabul in 1504, dispossessing a usurper. Circumstances thus turned his attention from the north-west to the south-east. But Babur got another chance to re-establish his position in Central Asia. Shaibani Khan seemed like Chingiz Khan and Timur to threaten universal conquest. He had aroused the enmity of Shah Ismail, the Safavi monarch of the rejuvenated Persian Empire. Shah Ismail completely defeated Shaibani Khan and killed him. Babur is said to have sent presents to Shah Ismail which the Persian King regarded in the light of tribute. Shah Ismail as the champion of the Shia sect agreed to restore Babur to Samarqand and Bukhara, but he probably insisted on Babur's agreeing to the propagation of Shia doctrines. Though weakened by the death of Shaibani Khan, the Uzbegs opposed Babur and he could not occupy Samarqand. The Persian army was defeated in the battle of Ghaj-davan, the Persians ascribing their defeat to the defection of Babur.

* Chaghatai was the second son of Chingiz Khan.

Babur's career outside India materially influenced his career in India. At Panipat and at Khanua we find the finished warrior trained in the school of adversity, who had learnt the use of fire-arms from his association with the Persians and the use of *tulgh ma* (or the flank attack) from his wars with the Uzbegs. The Uzbeg tactics consisted in turning the enemy's flank and charging simultaneously on front and rear at break-neck gallop. The effective combination between highly trained cavalry and new fire-arms, and the brilliant tactics that earned him victory at Panipat and Khanua, were the fruits of his experience in Central Asia. Another fact which is so often overlooked is the influence which Babur's stormy youth and romantic adventures exercised on Mughal Central Asian policy in the days of his successors.

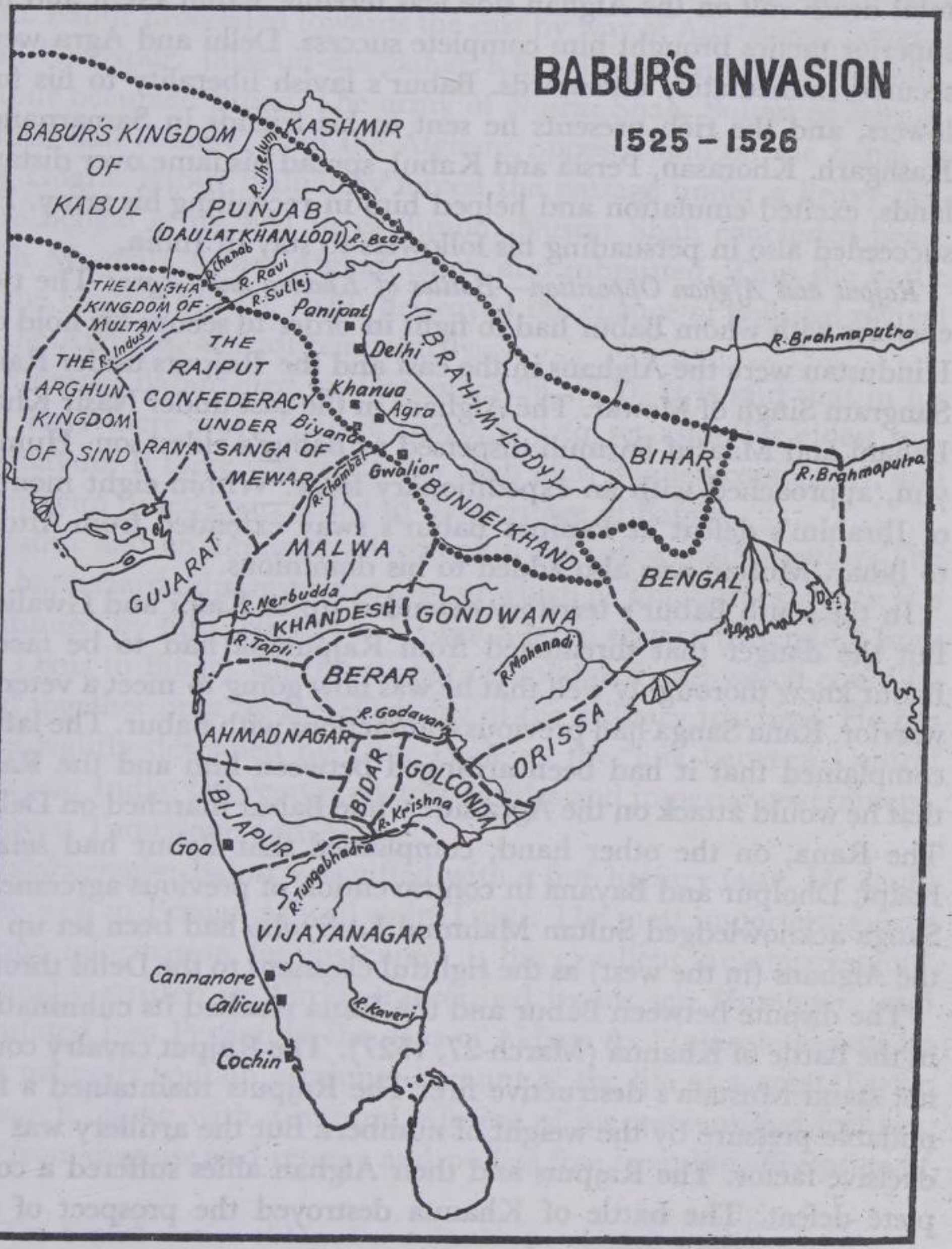
Career in Afghanistan: By April 1512, Babur's Central Asian ambition had suffered complete shipwreck. He withdrew to Kabul. Kandahar was occupied in 1522. The wealth of Ind had already tempted his adventurous spirit and fired his imagination. In 1516 he was busy re-organising his army, producing fire-arms and perfecting the tactics which the use of fire-arms necessitated.

The first Indian invasion of Babur took place in 1519. It was directed against the Yusufzais. An expedition was also directed against Bajaur in 1520. He regarded the Punjab as his own by right of descent from Timur. In 1524 he marched through the Khyber, crossed the Jhelum and the Chenab, and advanced up to Dipalpur, which he stormed. But he had to fall back on Lahore and return to Kabul. He depended on the co-operation of two discontented nobles of the Lodi Kingdom, Daulat Khan Lodi and Alam Khan Lodi, who turned against him when they found that he aimed at conquest rather than plunder. The whole situation now became different. Babur prepared himself to deal a crushing blow at the tottering Afghan Kingdom of Delhi.

First Battle of Panipat (1526): In November 1525, he marched from Kabul and entered the Punjab with an army of 12,000. Daulat Khan Lodi, who opposed him, was worsted and offered his submission. From the Punjab he advanced in the direction of Delhi. Ibrahim Lodi advanced from Delhi to meet him. Ibrahim Lodi has been described by Babur as 'an inexperienced young man, negligent in all his movements, who marched without order, halted or retired without plans, and engaged in battle without foresight.' Such a man could not be expected to defeat a trained warrior like Babur.

The decisive battle took place on April 21, 1526 at Panipat, where

the fate of India has so often been decided. In fact, if an enemy coming from the north-west could not be stopped at the Khyber, the inevitable battle-ground was the region between the Sutlej and the Jumna. The Punjab rivers being fordable at many places during winter, it was very difficult to hold a river-line there. An enemy could easily slip through. Naturally, the next place where a decisive engagement could be fought with advantage was in the extensive plains between the Sutlej and the Jumna, where numbers could tell and



where fighting could be done with Delhi and Agra behind the back of the defending army.

At Panipat Ibrahim brought about 40,000 troops. But the dense mass offered an excellent target to the fire-arms of Babur, managed by two experts, Ustad Ali and Mustafa. The country, being flat, was well suited to the handling of cavalry and the application of Babur's flanking tactics. Babur stiffened his weak front with a line of wagons, with a view to holding the Afghans along an extended front so that he could attack the flanks. Ibrahim was completely defeated and the total death-roll on the Afghan side was terrible. Babur's skill and his superior tactics brought him complete success. Delhi and Agra were secured immediately afterwards. Babur's lavish liberality to his followers, and the rich presents he sent to his friends in Samarqand, Kashgarh, Khorasan, Persia and Kabul, spread his fame over distant lands, excited emulation and helped him in recruiting his army. He succeeded also in persuading his followers to stay in India.

Rajput and Afghan Opposition—Battles of Khanua and Gogra: The two enemies with whom Babur had to fight in order to secure his hold on Hindustan were the Afghans in the east and the Rajputs under Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar. The Afghans in the east under Nasir Khan Lohani and Maaruf Farmuli dispersed as Babur's eldest son, Humayun, approached with an expeditionary force. Within eight months of Ibrahim's defeat at Panipat Babur's sway extended from Attock to Bihar. Multan was also added to his dominions.

In the south Babur's territory extended up to Kalpi and Gwalior. But the danger that threatened from Rajputana had to be faced. Babur knew thoroughly well that he was now going to meet a veteran warrior. Rana Sanga had previous transactions with Babur. The latter complained that it had been arranged between him and the Rana that he would attack on the Agra side while Babur marched on Delhi. The Rana, on the other hand, complained that Babur had seized Kalpi, Dholpur and Bayana in contravention of previous agreement. Sanga acknowledged Sultan Mahmud Lodi who had been set up by the Afghans (in the west) as the rightful claimant to the Delhi throne.

The dispute between Babur and the Rana reached its culmination in the battle of Khanua (March 27, 1527). The Rajput cavalry could not stand Mustafa's destructive fire. The Rajputs maintained a formidable pressure by the weight of numbers. But the artillery was the decisive factor. The Rajputs and their Afghan allies suffered a complete defeat. The battle of Khanua destroyed the prospect of the

establishment of Rajput supremacy in Northern India on the ruins of the Turko-Afghan Sultanate. Medini Rai, one of the most distinguished of Rana Sanga's lieutenants, who was in charge of the important fort of Chanderi in Malwa, was next worsted. The Rana died broken-hearted in 1528.

Free from the Rajput menace, Babur turned against the Afghans in the east. They were divided among themselves. The feuds between the Lohanis and the Lodis were fatal to Afghan interest. In 1529 Sultan Mahmud Lodi united a large section of the Afghans under him. Babur proceeded towards the east by way of Allahabad, Banaras and Ghazipur. Jalal-ud-din Bahar Khan Lohani submitted to him. Babur occupied Bihar. The army of Nusrat Shah, Sultan of Bangal, which had come to help the Afghans, opposed him on the banks of the Gogra. Babur brilliantly forced the passage under a heavy fire. The Bengal army fled in confusion. Nusrat Shah concluded peace with Mughals. Other Afghan chiefs also submitted. Thus the battle of the Gogra (May 6, 1529) destroyed the chance of political revival of the Afghans, at least temporarily.

Estimate: Babur died on December 26, 1530. It is said that in his last days there was a palace conspiracy to set aside his eldest son, Humayun. If there was really any such plot, it failed completely, and Humayun quietly succeeded to the heritage of Babur.

Babur had no administrative genius. He was a plain warrior. The old haphazard administrative system which he found in existence was continued by him. He left to his son a large empire (extending from the Oxus to Bihar) which was not consolidated and which could be held together only by the efficiency of the military machine. He has been rightly described by Lane-Poole as the 'link between Central Asia and India, between predatory hordes and imperial government, between Tamerlane and Akbar'.

Autobiography: Babur was gifted with a fine literary taste. He could write well in Persian as well as in Turki. The most important source of our information for his career is his excellent autobiography,* originally written in Turki, transcribed by his son Humayun, and translated into Persian in the days of Akbar. As Elphinstone puts it: 'His memoirs contain a minute account of the life of a great Tartar monarch, along with a natural effusion of his opinions and feelings, free from disguise and reserve and no less free from the affectation of

* The English version of Mrs. Beveredge is very pleasant reading.

extreme frankness and candour. The style is plain and manly as well as lively and picturesque and it presents his countrymen and contemporaries in their appearance, manners, pursuits and actions as clearly as in a mirror. In this respect it is almost the only specimen of real history in Asia—he gives the figures, dress, tastes and habits of each individual and describes the countries, the climate, scenery, production, works of art and industry. But the great charm of the work is in the character of the author. It is a relief in the midst of the pompous coldness of Asiatic history to find a King who can weep for days and tell us that he wept for the playmate of his boyhood.'

HUMAYUN AND SHER SHAH

Difficulties of Humayun: Humayun, who was born in 1508, ascended the throne on the 23rd of December 1530. His difficulties were very considerable. The conquest of Hindustan was not yet complete. The army that he commanded was a mixed body of adventurers composed of Chaghatai Turks, Mughals, Persians, Afghans and Indians. Babur's hold had been only one of military force. The Afghan chiefs in the east were still numerous and powerful, ready to take up arms. The Rajputs might at any time raise their head. Malwa was in deplorable confusion. In Gujarat Bahadur Shah was fast increasing his power. Humayun added to his own difficulties by confirming his brother Kamran in the possession of Kabul and Kandahar and, in a fit of generosity, giving him the Punjab and the district of Hissar Firoza (to the east of the Punjab proper) as well. He gave Sambhal to Askari and Mewat to Hindal. Kamran was more a rival than a brother and the block of territory given to him cut Humayun off from his best recruiting ground for his army. All these brothers at the most critical stages of his career deserted him and this hastened his downfall.

Humayun and the Afghans: Humayun's first military expedition was against the strong fort of Kalanjar in Bundelkhand, then ruled by a pro-Afghan Hindu Chief. Receiving a large sum of money from him, Humayun turned eastward to meet the Afghans under Sultan Mahmud Lodi, Biban Khan and Bayezid. The Afghans were defeated in the battle of Dadra. Bayezid was slain and Sultan Mahmud and the Afghans were dispersed. It was asserted by a section of the Afghans that their defeat was due to the treachery of Sher Khan. The Surs and the Lohanis were unwilling members of a confederacy dominated

by the Farmulis and the Lodis. Humayun then marched against the strong fort of Chunar, held by Sher Khan. After several months' blockade, Sher sent an ambassador to profess submission. He sent a body of Afghans under his son Qutb Khan to join Humayun who was now anxious to march against Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.

Humayun and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat: Bahadur Shah had annexed Malwa and was besieging Chitor, which had fallen on evil days after the death of Rana Sanga. The latter's son and successor, Vikramaditya, was unable to defend his capital, and his mother solicited Humayun's assistance. Bahadur had been joined by some discontented Mughal chiefs as also by Alam Khan Lodi and other Afghan refugees. From the east Humayun hastened to Malwa in 1534, defeated a considerable force of Afghan refugees sent by Bahadur, and intercepted Bahadur who was returning with the spoils of the successful sack of Chitor. Bahadur fortified his camp at Mandasor. He had an excellent train of artillery, 'second only to that of the Kaiser of Rum'. Humayun, who showed considerable daring, enterprise and skill, cut Bahadur off from all his resources, and Bahadur had to fly overnight with some of his followers, having spiked his heavy artillery. Humayun occupied the whole of Malwa and pushed on towards Gujarat. Champaner was scaled; Bahadur was driven to seek shelter in Diu. Humayun occupied Ahmedabad and, leaving his brother Askari as his viceroy, came back to Agra. But Bahadur, with Portuguese support, soon began his offensive. There were rebellions everywhere. Askari, who at one stage even meditated treason to his brother, had to make a precipitate retreat. Bahadur recovered the whole of Gujarat. Even Malwa was lost to Humayun, the local chieftains re-asserting their independence. Though Bahadur died soon after in a scuffle with the Portuguese, Humayun had his hands too full in Bihar and Bengal to be able to take any advantage of this event.

Early Career of Sher Shah: Sher Khan Sur, an Afghan chieftain of South Bihar, was more successful than Bahadur Shah in the contest against Humayun, and even succeeded in expelling Humayun from India. His original name was Farid. He was born about 1472. His father, Hasan Sur, was a *jagirdar* at Sasaram in Bihar. On account of the machinations of his step-mother, Sher left his home quite early in life and spent several years in Jaunpur. There he devoted himself to study and acquired great proficiency in Persian. Restored to the favour of his father, he was for several years responsible for the management of the *jagir*. This administrative experience stood him

in very good stead in later life. Once again his step-mother's jealousy compelled him to leave Sasaram. In 1522 Sher entered the service of Bahar Khan Lohani, the independent Afghan ruler of Bihar. After the first battle of Panipat he entered Mughal service, remained for some time among the Mughals and acquainted himself with their military arrangements. With Mughal help he recovered his paternal *jaġir* in 1528 from his step-brothers, his father having died some time before. In 1529 he became the guardian of the minor Lohani chief, Jalal Khan (son and successor of Bahar Khan).

Sher now found an excellent opportunity for personal aggrandisement. He seized the strong fort of Chunar in 1530. Humayun besieged Chunar in 1531, but Sher saved himself by a timely submission. The Lohani chiefs of Bihar now grew jealous of his rising power and entered into an alliance in 1533 with the Sultan of Bengal, Mahmud Shah, who was naturally anxious to check a powerful neighbour. The minor King, Jalal Khan, found Sher's yoke galling and fled to Bengal. Sher inflicted a crushing defeat on Mahmud Shah and his Lohani allies at Surajgarh (on the banks of the Kiul river) in 1534. This victory strengthened Sher's position and made him the uncrowned king of a large portion of Bihar. Taking advantage of Humayun's contest with Bah·dur Shah in Western India, Sher invaded Bengal. Mahmud Shah purchased peace by paying a large sum of money and ceding several districts. Many distinguished Afghan nobles flocked under Sher's standard. Towards the close of 1537 he again invaded Bengal with the purpose of conquering it permanently. The city of Gaur was besieged.

Humayun and Sher Shah: At this stage Humayun thought it necessary to check the rising power of Sher, who was fast becoming a menace to the Mughals in the east. He set out from Agra in July 1537, and besieged Chunar at the beginning of the following year. After reducing Gaur (April 1538) Sher seized the impregnable mountain fort of Rohtas by means of a stratagem, thereby securing a shelter for his family. Mahmud Shah fled to the camp of Humayun. After taking Chunar Humayun hastened to Bengal and came to Gaur *via* Teliagarhi (near Sahebganj). Sher returned from Bengal by another route *via* Birbhum and Jharkhand to Rohtas. Humayun spent nine months in Gaur indulging in pleasures. Sher in the meantime took Banaras, laid siege to Jaunpur and overran the whole country as far as Kanauj.

This state of things compelled Humayun to withdraw from Bengal. He was proceeding along the northern bank of the Ganges when a

false sense of honour induced him to cross to the southern. Sher quitted the hills of Rohtas and marched out to meet Humayun. For about two months the two armies skirmished. As it has been said, 'Situated as he now was, Humayun in ordinary circumstances might have looked for assistance from his brothers and the provinces around his capital. But no consolatory ray of the hope gleamed on him. Instead of ready succour there was procrastination, intrigue and treason.' Hindal had abandoned his post. Kamran, who had come up to Agra, also left his brother to his fate. He looked to his own immediate interest without caring for the common cause. At this stage Sher opened negotiations. His terms were that the fort of Chunar, with the territories on its east, should be given to him. The Mughals were thus thrown off their guard when suddenly in the pleasing coolness of the early dawn of June 27, 1539, Sher made an attack on the Mughal camp. In this battle (at Chausa, near Buxar) Humayun lost his army. His Begum was captured by Sher, but he personally succeeded in escaping. In addition to Bengal and Bihar Sher was now in possession of Jaunpur. His horizon was widened. He was crowned King in December 1539.

Early next year, Humayun tried to recover his lost position. A decisive battle took place at Hardoi (on the bank of the Ganges) on May 17, 1540. This battle is commonly known as the battle of Kanauj. The Mughal army was about 40,000 strong. At this decisive moment Kamran did not come to his brother's help. What actually took place is very obscure. It was the first pitched battle that Sher did not win by stratagem. Khawas Khan, Sher's lieutenant, charged the right wing of the Mughals. The attack succeeded. The camp-followers were driven to the Mughal centre and threw it into confusion. Humanyun's artillery could not fire, for in its front were his own camp-followers. The army became a mob. Sher left the pursuit of the broken army to his lieutenant Brahmajit Gaur.

Humayun's Flight: After his disastrous defeat at Hardoi Humayun went to the Punjab, tried in vain to win over his brothers, and then withdrew to Sind. There he spent valuable time in the fruitless siege of Bhakkar and Sehwan. His marriage to Hamida Begum, famous in history as mother of Akbar, took place in the summer of 1541. After this he marched towards Marwar to meet Maldev who had agreed to support him. But Humayun appeared twelve months after the date of invitation. Now, under the changed circumstances, Maldev had to submit to Sher's demand of Humayun's expulsion from his dominions.

In the course of the retreat of Humayun from Rajputana Akbar was born at Amarkot on the 15th of October 1542 (23rd November 1542?). Humayun retreated towards Kandahar. When Askari advanced towards Kandahar from Ghazni, Humayun fled to Persia. 'Driven from every spot of which he had lately called himself master and viewing with the deepest dread the possibility of falling into the hands of his brother, he resolved to abandon the kingdoms of his father and threw himself on the dubious and untried generosity of a stranger.'

Causes of Humayun's Failure: Humayun's failure to hold his own in India was largely due to his own faults. It has been said that he was capable of great energy on occasions but he was incapable of sustained effort. His indolence and revels prevented him from following up his victories. Moreover, it was impossible with the limited number of his troops to maintain an empire so extensive and scattered without a well-combined general plan of operations against his enemies. A patient superintending policy was necessary. Most of his veterans perished in the Bengal campaign. His want of success and the hostility of his brothers generated a general disaffection in his camp and court. Sher was astute and adroit enough to take advantage of this characteristic weakness of his enemy.

Conquests of Sher Shah: After the flight of Humayun, Sher Shah was the undisputed master of Northern India. He was so strong that Kamran had to placate him by ceding the Punjab. Sher built the fort of Rohtas in the Punjab and left 50,000 troops there to watch the Mughals. Sind and Multan were annexed.

In Bengal the spirit of rebellion was so rife that the change of Governors was no remedy. The city of Gaur (or Lakhnauti) was known as *the city of strife*. Sher changed completely the military character of the government of Bengal. He reduced the boundary of the province, divided it into nineteen *Sarkars*, and, to co-ordinate the work of the *Sarkars*, appointed a *Qazi Fazilat* who was given the designation of *Amin-i-Bangala* instead of *Hakim-i-Bangala*.

In Central India Gwalior was taken after a siege of two years. Malwa submitted in 1542. But Puran Mal of Raisin (in Malwa) was in possession of a fort which was strategically very important. The siege of this fort lasted four months. Puran Mal was granted terms and he was assured that he would be allowed to march away safely with his family and followers. But as he came out with his troops and his family there was a general massacre. This atrocious act has

besmirched the reputation of Sher Shah. It is said that he had to yield to the clamour of his troops.

The most difficult military operation of Sher was his fight in Rajputana against Maldev of Marwar, who was now the most powerful ruler in Rajputana. In 1544 Sher marched against him with an army of 80,000. But at some distance from Jodhpur the invading army was brought to a halt. For a month the two armies faced each other. Sher's military situation was difficult. But the simplest of stratagems was sufficient to disperse the Rathor army. A forged letter purported to have been written by some chiefs of Marwar to Sher Shah was dropped in the Rajput camp and fell into the hands of Maldev as designed. He suspected treachery and fled at once. Sher pushed on. Maldev retreated from Jodhpur to Siwana. Sher did not aim at the complete subjugation of Rajputana but wanted the political and geographical isolation of the chiefs. His hold on Rajputana was to be something like the later British occupation of the N. W. frontier. He stationed his troops in Ajmer, Jodhpur, Mt. Abu and Chitor to overcome the Rajput chiefs.

In May 1545, while assaulting the fort of Kalanjar in Bundelkhand, Sher met with his death by an accident. The fort was captured.

Sher Shah's Administrative System: Babur brought with him a new theory of Kingship. He wanted to be no Sultan enjoying a kind of hegemony over autonomous princes but claimed to be a *padishah* with the divine right of Timur's blood. 'It was Sher Shah who unwittingly built up for the Mughals that structure of administrative machinery which, while it was necessary for securing the triumph of the new ideal of kingship they represented, they had been entirely unable to construct for themselves.'

The Turko-Afghans had built an administrative system from the top downwards in the same way in which their architects had made Hindu temples into mosques by demolishing the upper portion and constructing domes and arches. Sher, who had begun his career as the *Zabbardast Shiqdar* at Sasaram, built from below. But he was not an innovator. It is unhistorical to say that he created a new *pargana* (which consisted of several villages) machinery unknown to the former Sultans. But he revitalised what he found in operation at the time when he took charge of his father's *jagir*. In every *pargana* he placed an *Amin*, one *Shiqdar*, one treasurer and two *Karkuns*, one to write Hindi and another to write Persian. Several *parganas* constituted a *Sarkar*, which was placed under a *Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran* and a *Munsif-i-Munisfan*.

Lands were surveyed on a uniform system, each holding being separately measured, and the Government demand was $\frac{1}{3}$rd of the gross produce. Sher Shah ordered a general survey of the land for the use of the Central Government. This gave him a new basis for the fixing of a new farm. But his survey could not have been very satisfactory, for his reign was too short for the purpose. The choice of payment in cash or kind was given. In order that there might not be any scope for confusion and oppression the *Kabuliyat* and *Patta* system was introduced. These documents contained a clear enumeration of the dues of the State from the individual concerned as also his rights over the particular piece of land. There were two additional charges besides the land revenue. These were the expenses of survey and the tax-gatherer's fee. Sher's policy was *anti-jagir*, though the practice of granting *jagir* continued during the Sur period. He also curtailed the grant of *wakf* lands as much as possible. Sher's land revenue system took the earlier system a step further and helped the evolution of Akbar's more systematic plan of assessment and collection.

Sher was also responsible for a reform of the coinage. He issued an abundance of silver coins practically equal in value to the modern rupee. He fostered trade by abolishing vexatious duties. He also established an excellent road system and is said to have built 1,700 *Sarais* or rest-houses for travellers. The *Dakchauki* system was also improved very considerably. The police system was remodelled; the village headmen were made responsible for the maintenance of peace and the detection of criminals in their respective areas. Attempts were made to administer prompt and impartial justice.

Sher Shah maintained a huge standing army, comprising 1,50,000 horse, 25,000 foot and 5,000 elephants. He continued Alauddin's system of branding the horses and used to keep a descriptive pay-roll in his archives. His empire was not divided into provinces as in Akbar's system of organisation but forty-seven garrison towns were made the seats of military commanders. Some Hindus occupied positions of trust. The most important of his Hindu lieutenants was Brahmajit Gaur who was entrusted with the task of pursuing Humayun after the battles of Chausa and Kanauj. Akbar's greatest contribution was that he secularised the State and changed entirely the spirit of the administrative system.

During the short time that Sher ruled at Delhi, a new form of architecture was initiated. Sher Shah's royal chapel, the *Qila-i-Kuhna masjid*, shows a refined taste. Percy Brown says that 'much of the

character of the works carried out under Akbar and Jahangir may be traced to the genius of the master-builder who produced the remarkable little mosque in the citadel of Sher Shah.' The fine taste of Sher in architecture is manifested in his noble mausoleum at Sasaram. 'Its pyramidal dome, the silhouette of which seen at sunset is something to be remembered, the sense of finely adjusted bulk, the proportions of its diminishing stages, the harmonious transitions from square to octagon and octagon to circle, the simplicity, breadth and scale of its parts, all combine to produce an effect of great beauty. India boasts of several mausoleums of more than ordinary splendour but Sher Shah's island tomb at Sasaram, grey and brooding, is perhaps the most impressive of them all.'

Estimate of Sher Shah: Sher Shah was a resourceful conqueror and a wise administrator. In estimating his abilities two important facts must be noted. In the first place, his reign was very brief, covering a period of about five years. Within this short period he conquered almost the whole of Northern India and organised a sound administrative system. Secondly, Sher Shah had to fight for himself; he did not command the united support of the Afghans. He did not rise to power as the champion of the Afghans against the Mughals. Despite the weaknesses of the Mughals it was not easy for the neglected son of a petty *jagirdar* to establish an empire.

With regard to the Hindus Sher Shah's reign marks the emergence of a new policy which was developed by Akbar. He was tolerant of Hinduism and he had the wisdom of exploiting Hindu talent for the creation and consolidation of his empire. He deliberately set aside the traditions of Firuz Tughlaq and Sikandar Lodi.

Successors of Sher Shah: Sher Shah was succeeded by his son Jalal Khan, the elder brother Adil being passed over by the nobles. On his accession, Jalal took the title of Islam Shah. He suppressed rebellious nobles like Khawas Khan and Haibat Niazi. The Ghakkars were crushed and on the Kashmir frontier the fortress of Mankot was completed. He ruled for nine years, dying in 1554.

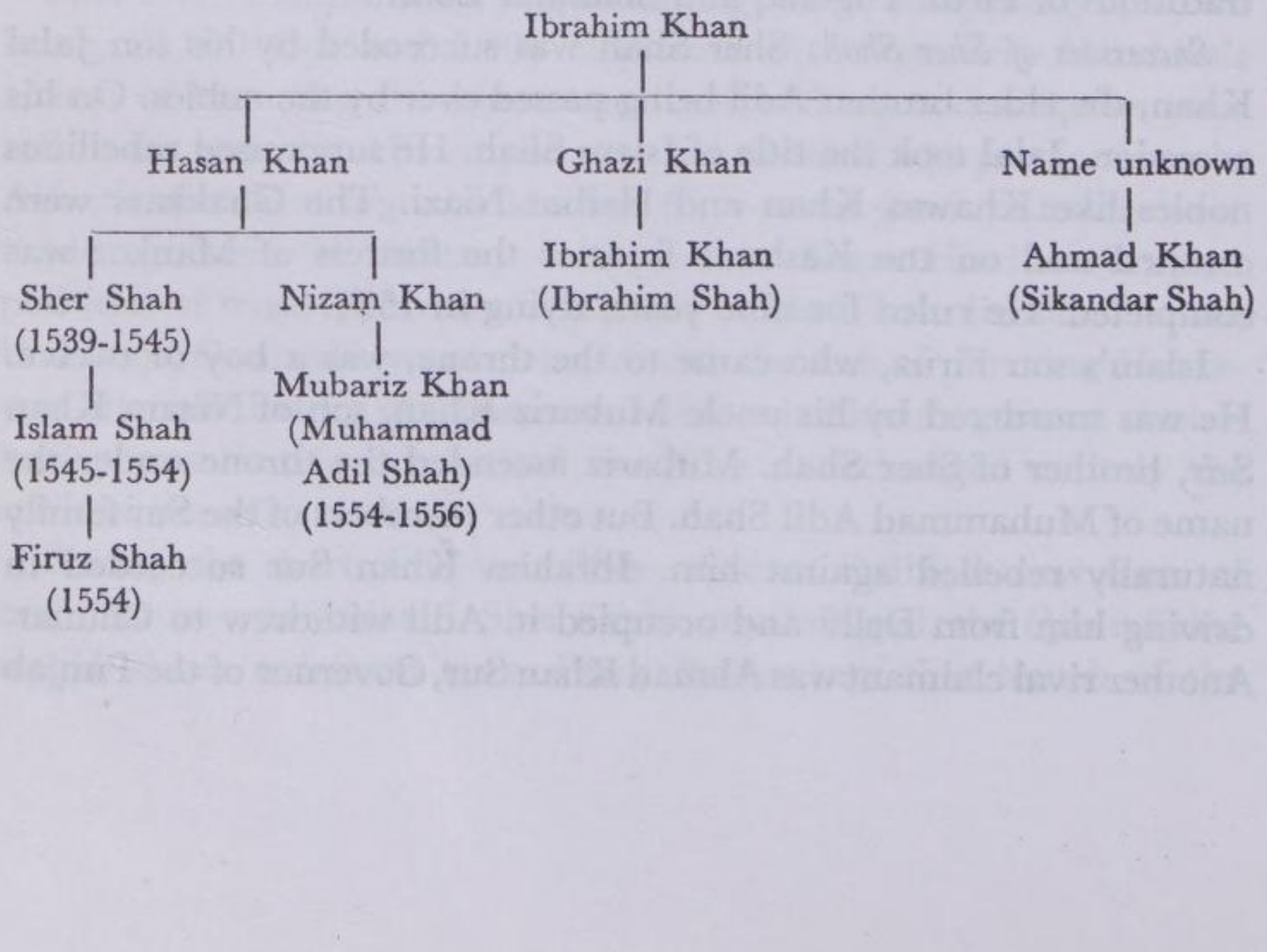
Islam's son Firuz, who came to the throne, was a boy of twelve. He was murdered by his uncle Mubariz Khan, son of Nizam Khan Sur, brother of Sher Shah. Mubariz ascended the throne under the name of Muhammad Adil Shah. But other members of the Sur family naturally rebelled against him. Ibrahim Khan Sur succeeded in driving him from Delhi and occupied it. Adil withdrew to Chunar. Another rival claimant was Ahmad Khan Sur, Governor of the Punjab

and brother-in-law of Adil, who assumed the title of Sikandar Shah. Muhammad Khan Sur, Governor of Bengal, also threw off his allegiance. Some time later Ibrahim Khan was defeated at Farah (near Agra) by Sikandar.

Restoration of Humayun: These dissensions among the Afghans made it possible for Humayun to invade India. He had in his exile succeeded in securing Persian help for the conquest of Afghanistan, on condition that Kandahar should be restored to Persia. He occupied Kandahar and Kabul in 1545. Though he handed over Kandahar to Persia, he took the earliest opportunity of re-taking it. After the conquest of Kabul Kamran was blinded. Some time later Humayun failed in his attempt on Badakhshan. In November 1554, he invaded India. Lahore was captured in February 1555. At Machhiwara (in the Punjab) Sikandar's army was completely defeated, and at Sirhind he was again defeated by the Mughals under Bairam Khan and driven to the Punjab hills. Delhi and Agra were occupied in July 1555.

In the meantime Adil's Hindu general, Himu, had succeeded in defeating Ibrahim Sur at Kalpi and near Khanua; he also defeated and killed Muhammad Khan Sur at Chhaparghata—32 kilometres from Kalpi. Only two powerful contestants now remained on the scene—Humayun and Adil Shah. But Humayun died in January 1556, leaving to his boy son Akbar and his guardians the task of crushing the Afghans.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE SUR DYNASTY



CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

AKBAR: CONQUESTS

AKBAR was born on Sunday, October 15, 1542. V. A. Smith's reason for the choice of November 23, 1542, as his date for Akbar's birth is a statement by Jauhar, a contemporary writer; but all other contemporary writers controvert his theory, particularly Gulbadan Begam and Abul Fazl. On June 22, 1555, after Humayun's victory at Sirhind, Akbar was formally declared to be heir-apparent. In November 1555, he was appointed Governor of the Punjab with Bairam Khan as his guardian. Akbar had a half-brother named Muhammad Hakim, two years his junior, who was appointed Governor of Kabul, with Munim Khan as the actual administrator. When the news of the accidental death of Humayun reached Bairam Khan and Akbar, the formal enthronement of Akbar took place in a garden at Kalanaur in the Punjab (February 14, 1556). This simply registered a claim to sovereignty, for Akbar had to reckon with Himu before he could exercise effective authority.

Himu: Himu was originally a shop-keeper dealing in saltpetre in Rewari. He caught the eye of Islam Shah and rose steadily. As Adil Shah's general and chief adviser, he won a number of victories against formidable opponents. There is nothing to prove that Himu set himself up as an independent sovereign at any stage of his career. No coin of Himu has been found anywhere. There is the clear statement of Abul Fazl that 'from foresight he preserved the nominal sovereignty for Adil and waged brave wars against his opponents.' There is no doubt that Himu was not an unworthy antagonist of the Great Mughal and possessed courage, enterprise and plan.

Second Battle of Panipat (1556): After getting rid of Muhammad Adil Shah's Afghan rivals Himu marched towards Delhi with an army of 50,000 horse, 1,000 elephant and 51 cannon, sweeping all opposition aside. Tardi Beg Khan, the Mughal Governor of Delhi, was defeated at Tughlaqabad. Akbar and Bairam Khan thereupon marched towards Delhi, and at the very beginning succeeded in seizing Himu's park of artillery which he had sent in advance in the belief that the Mughal army was far off. After this initial success the Mughal army drew up on the field of Panipat. Their effective strength was 10,000. The battle began on November 5, 1556. At first the Mughal horse seemed to be shaken by the vigorous charges of Himu's

elephants. A detachment was thereupon sent to attack Himu's flank, and some confusion was created in his ranks. The Mughal archers used their arrows with deadly effect. A simultaneous attack on all sides weakened Himu. He was struck by an arrow and his army broke up in disorderly rout. As he lay senseless he was brought before the boy King, who was asked by Bairam to kill him; he obeyed his guardian and struck off Himu's head with his sword. This is the view of the really contemporary historians, though Abul Fazl, Nizam-ud-din, Badauni and others say that Akbar refused to strike a senseless prisoner. In any case, it was the well-directed flight of the Mughal arrows that decided the second battle of Panipat. The contest between the Afghans and the Mughals for the sovereignty of Delhi was finally decided in favour of the latter.

End of Sur Opposition: After Himu's death Sur opposition to Mughal ascendancy did not cause much trouble to Akbar and Bairam Khan. Sikandar Sur had fled to the Siwalik hills and thence withdrawn to the fortress of Mankot, which was besieged by the Mughals. The fortress surrendered on May 24, 1557. Sikandar sent his son to the Mughal camp as a security for good behaviour and was assigned a *jagir* in Bihar. He died two years later as a fugitive in Bengal. Adil Shah, master of Himu, had not been able to accompany him to the west on account of disturbances in Bengal created by Khizr Khan, son of Muhammad Khan Sur. He was defeated and slain in Bihar in 1557. Sher Khan, son of Adil Shah, tried in 1561 to take advantage of Bairam Khan's rebellion but was defeated by Khan Zaman at Jaunpur. He disappeared after this. Ibrahim Sur died as a fugitive in Orissa some years later. Thus the cause of the Afghans collapsed soon after the second battle of Panipat.

Bairam Khan: Bairam Khan, a Turkoman, was originally a subject of Persia. Early in life he joined the service of Babur and after Babur's death he remained in the service of Humayun. He played a very important part in the Bengal expedition of Humayun, saving the imperial advance guard on one occasion by his valour and resourcefulness. After the battle of Kanauj he escaped; but he was subsequently taken prisoner by Sher Shah, who tried to win over this brilliant young warrior, only to hear in reply that real attachment can never change. Bairam again succeeded in effecting his escape and joined Humayun in Sind. When Humayun escaped to Persia, Bairam, naturally enough, became his chief adviser. At Kandahar and at Sirhind Humayun owed much of his success to the ability of this

faithful follower, and it was in the fitness of things that he should appoint him as the guardian of Akbar.

As Akbar's guardian Bairam had to face a very difficult situation. In order to ensure discipline and vigour in the small army under his command, he had to adopt some drastic measures like arresting a rebellious noble named Shah Abu-l-Maali and putting to death Tardi Beg, the Mughal general who made a disgracefully feeble defence of Delhi against Himu. In consequence of these severe measures 'the Chagtai officers, each of whom esteemed himself at least equal to Kaikobad and Kaikaoos, now found it necessary to conform to the orders of Bairam Khan and to submit quietly to his authority.' Bairam rejected the timid advice of retreat to Kabul and boldly went forward to meet Himu. He made an inspiring speech to dispel the gloom of defeatism on the eve of the second battle of Panipat and won decisive victory there.

But when danger no longer threatened the Mughals, Bairam is said to have changed. He married Salima Begum, the daughter of Humayun's sister, and thereby became connected by marriage with the royal family. Hated as a Shia, he made the great mistake of appointing in 1558-59 Shaikh Gadai, a Shia, as *Sadr-us-Sudur* (the head of all the law officers and controller of the grant of lands for ecclesiastical and charitable purposes). The orthodox Sunnis resented this appointment. He had already given offence to the friends and followers of Tardi Beg and Shah Amu-l-Maali. It is said that his undue arrogance and indiscreet remarks gave offence to many. There was a very strong court party opposed to what they felt to be the oppressive dictatorship of Bairam. Akbar, who had entered on his eighteenth year in 1560, also resented the galling yoke of Bairam, who even denied him a privy purse. Akbar's mother Hamida Banu Begum, his foster-mother Maham Anaga, her son Adham Khan, and her relative Shihab-ud-din, Governor of Delhi, who surrounded Akbar, had very little difficulty in inducing him to assert himself against his guardian. In 1560 Akbar informed Bairam Khan that he wanted to take the reins of government into his own hands and requested him to go to Mecca. Bairam submitted, but Pir Muhammad Sherwani, an upstart who had been dismissed by Bairam Khan for his arrogance, was sent to 'pack him off as quickly as possible to Mecca.' Insulted by the hustling tactics of Pir Muhammad, Bairam rebelled. He was defeated near Jalandhar and he surrendered; but Akbar pardoned him and allowed him to proceed to Mecca in a

manner befitting his rank. In Gujarat, on his way to Mecca, Bairam was murdered by an Afghan (1561). His little son Abdur Rahim was brought to court and lived to become a *Khan Khanan.*

Misgovernment (1560-62): The pilot was dropped but Akbar was still too young to control the army and administration. Bairam Khan's ascendancy had created in his mind a feeling that all authority should not be concentrated in the hands of an all-powerful *Wazir.* Munim Khan was summoned from Kabul to take charge of administration. Pir Muhammad and Adham Khan led an expedition against Malwa. Maham Anaga exercised considerable influence. Akbar, however, began to take some personal share in public business. He summoned an experienced administrator named Shams-ud-din Muhammad Khan Atga from Kabul and appointed him a minister. Slowly but steadily Akbar asserted himself. He recalled Adham Khan from Malwa, replacing him by Abdulla Khan Uzbeg, and on the murder of Shams-ud-din Atga by Adham Khan, had him killed. The period 1560-62 has been described as the period of petticoat misgovernment. Maham Anaga, no doubt, exercised considerable influence on account of Akbar's inexperience, Munim Khan's weakness and the trust that Akbar reposed in her and her relatives, who were false friends. The mismanagement of these years is to be attributed to Akbar's inability to find a capable minister in succession to Bairam Khan. In 1562 his period of apprenticeship was over; he took upon himself the direction of policy and control over administration, with the ministers henceforth acting in a position of definite subordination.

Early Conquests (1558-62): Akbar has been described as 'a strong and stout annexationist before whose sun the modest star of Lord Dalhousie pales.' No doubt he was intent upon conquest and must be regarded as one of the greatest imperialists of history. 'A monarch,' he said, 'should be ever intent on conquests, otherwise his neighbours rise in arms against him.' This was, of course, ordinary kingly ambition. The path chalked out by him was faithfully followed by his successors until the Mughal Empire reached the limit of its territorial expansion under Aurangzeb.

The recovery of the lost Mughal dominion in Hindustan was begun even during the Regency of Bairam Khan, when, one after another, Gwalior, Ajmer and Jaunpur were reconquered. This helped the gradual consolidation of Akbar's dominion around Delhi and Agra. Between 1560-61 the conquest of Malwa was completed. Adham Khan, assisted by Pir Muhammad Sherwani, succeeded in

defeating Baz Bahadur, who had assumed the title of Sultan, near Sarangpur. After the recall of Adham Khan, Pir Muhammad was placed in charge of the imperfectly conquered province. He was drowned while pursuing Baz Bahadur. Abdulla Khan Uzbeg, who succeeded him, expelled Baz Bahadur, who did not, however, submit until 1571.

In 1562 Raja Bihari Mal of Amber (Jaipur) submitted to Akbar without fighting. He was given a command of 5,000 and his son Bhagwan Das and grandson Man Singh entered the Mughal army. Both Bhagwan Das and Man Singh played a leading part in extending and consolidating the Mughal Empire, and the close connection with the imperial family raised the hitherto obscure principality of Amber to a position of predominance in Rajputana.

Conquest of Gondwana (1564): Akbar's next conquest was that of Gondwana. Asaf Khan, Governor of the eastern provinces, was directed to attack Rani Durgavati who governed Garah Katanga (northern portion of Madhya Pradesh) in the Gond country as the Regent for her minor son, Bir Narayan. She made a stubborn resistance worthy of her Rajput ancestry; but she was overwhelmed in a battle that took place between Garah and Mandala (in the Jubbulpore district). When she was faced with defeat she stabbed herself. Bir Narayan also died fighting bravely to save the fortress of Chauragarh. The women performed self-immolation, the awful sacrifice of *jauhar*.

Siege of Chitor (1567-68): Akbar's famous military enterprise, the siege and capture of Chitor, was begun in October 1567. The Rana of Chitor, Udai Singh, son of Rana Sangram Singh, is said to have given shelter to Baz Bahadur and another insubordinate chief, that of Narwar. In any case, strategic considerations demanded that the sovereign of Upper India should have in his hands the fetters of Rajputana—Merta (which had already been conquered) in Marwar, Chitor in Mewar and Ranthambhor in Bundi. Akbar's siege of Chitor lasted four months. Udai Singh, instead of recklessly facing the Mughals directly as his father Sangram Singh had done, personally took shelter in the hills, leaving the defence of Chitor to Jaimal Rathor and Patta. They offered obstinate resistance. Akbar showed considerable patience and skill in conducting the siege of Chitor in which three things were employed—a long and deep trench (*Sabat*), movable shields to protect the workmen (*Turah*), a high erection commanding the walls (*Siba*). The siege might have lasted much longer but Akbar

succeeded in killing Jaimal by a lucky shot. The garrison then gave up all hope and the women resorted to the *jauhar* sacrifice before the final capture. The Rajput warriors perished fighting. Akbar was so much exasperated by the obstinate defence that he massacred a large number of non-combatants who had helped in it. Chitor had before been taken by Alauddin Khalji and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and its capture was not in itself a unique military achievement; nor did the fall of the capital foreshadow the subjugation of the State.

Rajput Policy: Ranthambhor fell in 1569. A treaty was then concluded with Bundi which gives us a very good idea of Akbar's eagerness to placate the Rajputs and the policy which he pursued towards them. Tod in his *Annals* says that through the mediation of the ruler of Amber (Jaipur) a treaty was concluded with Bundi. The terms were—(*i*) The chiefs of Bundi should be exempted from the custom, degrading to a Rajput, of sending a bride to the Mughal *harem*. (*ii*) They were to be exempted from the *Jeziyah* or poll tax. (*iii*) They were not to be compelled to cross Attock. (*iv*) They were not to send their wives and female relatives to hold a stall in the bazaar on the occasion of the *Nauroz*. (*v*) They were to have the privilege of entering the *Dewan-i-Am* fully armed. (*vi*) Their temples were to be respected. (*vii*) They should never be placed under the command of a Hindu leader. (*viii*) Their horses should not be branded with the imperial *Dagh*. (*ix*) They should be allowed to beat their kettle-drums as far as the Red Gate.

Though Mewar never submitted to Akbar and Pratap Singh, son of Udai Singh, offered him stubborn resistance, the Mughal Emperor was for all practical purposes the paramount power in Rajputana, most of whose chieftains became *mansabdars* of the Mughal Empire. The Rajputs became the most devoted soldiers of the *Padishah*. One-third of the Mughal horsemen were recruited from the Rajput clans. Tod describes Akbar as 'the first successful conqueror of Rajput independence; to this end his virtues were powerful auxiliaries, as by his skill in the analysis of mind and its readiest stimulant to action, he was enabled to gild the chains with which he bound them.' This was precisely the difference between the Rajput policy of Akbar and that of Alauddin Khalji and Sher Shah.

Conquest of Gujarat (1572-73): After the surrender of Kalanjar in 1569, Akbar felt himself free to devote his attention further towards the west as well as the east. His next move was against Gujarat which his father had conquered and lost. There was anarchy in Gujarat.

The nominal Sultan, Muzaffar Shah III, was unable to control the warring chieftains, one of whom invited Akbar. In November 1572, Akbar approached Ahmedabad; Muzaffar Shah III submitted and was pensioned off. He then advanced to Surat and on the way showed conspicuous personal bravery in a hard-fought skirmish at Sarnal. The siege of Surat was terminated by capitulation in February 1573. A treaty was concluded with the Portuguese at Cambay, which secured safe-conduct for the Mecca pilgrims. After making arrangements for the administration of the province Akbar returned to his capital, which was then at Fathepur Sikri.

Very soon, however, Akbar received information that a fresh insurrection had broken out, led by certain irrepressible Mughal princes known as Mirzas. He fitted out an expedition with astounding rapidity and advanced at hurricane speed, reaching Ahmedabad, a distance of 960 kilometres, in nine days. With an army of about 3,000 only he made an impetuous attack at Ahmedabad on a rebel army of 20,000. He did not wait for reinforcement and charged like a fierce tiger. He won the fight and crushed the rebellion (September 1573). Akbar's second Gujarat expedition has been described as the quickest Indian campaign on record. The conquest of 1573 was final. Gujarat not only increased the resources of the empire but also secured for it free access to the sea and brought it in contact with the European merchants.

Conquest of Bengal (1574-76) *and Orissa* (1592): Akbar's next conquest was that of Bengal. Sulaiman Kararani, an Afghan chief, became ruler of Bengal in 1564 in succession to the Surs. In 1566 he besieged Rohtas, but when Akbar sent an army to relieve the fortress he thought it prudent to withdraw to Bengal. He formally recognised the superior authority of Akbar by sending him valuable presents. He transferred his capital from Gaur to Tanda. He also conquered the Hindu kingdom of Orissa. He died in 1572. His elder son, Bayazid, succeeded him but died soon after. Daud, the youngest son who came next, assumed all the insignia of royalty, reading the *Khutba* in his own name and issuing coins. This was a challenge to the Mughal Emperor. Moreover, Daud provoked Akbar, who was then in Gujarat, by advancing and seizing imperial outposts.

In 1574 Akbar began his voyage down the Ganges in the rainy season, which is not the campaigning season in India. Daud was driven out of Patna and Hajipur. Akbar returned to his capital, leaving the Bengal campaign to be conducted by his general Munim

Khan, assisted by Raja Todar Mal. Akbar's capture of Patna in the middle of the rainy season was an almost unprecedented achievement. Munim Khan followed up this success, seizing in quick succession Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Colgong and the Teliagarhi pass. Then he entered Tanda, Daud retiring to Orissa. In March 1575, a decisive battle was fought at Tukaroi in the Balasore district. Daud was defeated and made his submission. In opposition to the advice of Raja Todar Mal, Munim Khan granted him favourable terms, leaving him in possession of Orissa. But Daud rose up in arms again a few months later. He was defeated and slain by the imperialists in the battle of Rajmahal in July 1576. Although Bengal formally became a part of the Mughal Empire, some powerful chiefs continued to enjoy practical independence for many years. Of these Isa Khan (of Dacca-Mymensingh), Kedar Rai (of Vikrampur in Dacca district), and Pratapaditya (of Jessore) deserve special mention.

Orissa was annexed in 1592.

Rana Pratap Singh (1572-79): Even after the conquest of Chitor and the submission of almost all the Rajput States Akbar had his troubles in Rajputana. Pratap Singh, son of Udai Singh and grandson of Sangram Singh, ascended the throne in 1572 and began his memorable struggle against the Great Mughal. The Princes of Marwar, Amber, Bikanir and Bundi had made their submission, but 'single-handed for a quarter of a century,' to use the inimitable language to Tod, 'did he withstand the combined efforts of the empire, at one time carrying destruction into the plains, at another flying from rock to rock, feeding his family from the fruits of his native hills, and rearing the nursling hero Amar, amidst savage beasts and scarcely less savage men, a fit heir to his prowess and revenge.' Man Singh of Amber, Akbar's loyal general, inflicted a crushing defeat upon Pratap in June 1576, in the battle of Haldighat or Gogunda. His strong places fell one after another into the hands of the Mughals, but he continued the unequal fight from the mountain regions. During the protracted contest the fertile tracts of Mewar were *bechirag*, without a lamp. Pratap later recovered all Mewar except Chitor, Ajmer and Mandalgarh. He died in 1597. During the last days of Pratap, Akbar was unable to continue active campaigns against him because of his preoccupations elsewhere. It has been suggested by Tod that Akbar was touched by his gallant resistance and refrained from disturbing his repose during his last years. But such sentimentalism was out of place in Akbar's politics. Pratap Singh was so surrounded by Mughal

dominions on all sides that Akbar with his almost unlimited resources could afford to wait and pursue more easy conquests further afield.

Rebellion in Bengal (1580-84): In 1580 there was a rebellion of Mughal officers in Bengal and Bihar as a protest against Akbar's religious and administrative innovations. The *Qazi* of Jaunpur is said to have issued a *fatwa* justifying rebellion against Akbar in view of his heterodoxy. The rebels are said to have acted in concert with Akbar's half-brother, Mirza Muhammad Hakim of Kabul. By 1584 rebellion in Bihar and Bengal was suppressed by Akbar's officers —Raja Todar Mal, Mirza Aziz Koka and Shahbaz Khan.

Absorption of Kabul (1581-85): Akbar himself led an expedition to Kabul in 1581. Laurence Binyon says: 'He thought as much of his brother as an eagle might think of a mosquito.' Hakim was nominally dependent on the sovereign of Hindustan but was really independent. He was a weakling, a worthless drunkard. But besides the Bengal rebels, some influential court nobles, including Shah Mansur, the Finance Minister, were suspected to be in league with him. At the head of 15,000 cavalry Hakim came as far as Lahore. He was opposed by Man Singh and compelled to withdraw to Kabul. But Akbar pursued him at the head of 50,000 cavalry and 500 elephants. Shah Mansur was hanged on the way. Akbar entered Kabul in August 1581, Hakim having fled to the hills on his approach. Hakim was permitted to rule at Kabul until 1585, when he died of excessive drinking and his territory was absorbed. Man Singh made the necessary arrangements for its administration.

The North-West Frontier: The absorption of Kabul in the empire made it necessary for Akbar to keep close watch on the north-west frontier. That frontier had great political, military and economic importance. A vast irregular belt of territory extends from the western border of Kashmir round Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu and then stretches southward down the Indus valley to the Sind seaboard—a total length, including deflections, of about 1920 kilometres. In the north the Khyber pass connects the Peshawar valley with Kabul; in the centre the Tochi and Gomal passes connect the Indus plain with Ghazni and South Afghanistan; while the Mulla, the Bolan and Gomal passes connect the plain of Sind with the plateaus of Khelat and Kandahar. Through these routes passes the trade between Afghanistan, Baluchistan and India. For the protection of this difficult frontier the effective subjugation of the turbulent Afghan tribes, such as the Yusufzais, was necessary. In 1586 a Mughal army suffered

a disaster in the Swat valley. Akbar had to conciliate the tribal leaders by granting them pensions. His long-continued residence at Lahore suggests a desire to strengthen the north-west frontier.

The rising power of the Uzbegs was a threat to Mughal rule in Afghanistan. Abdulla Khan, an Uzbeg chief, had made himself master of Badakhshan. The grandson of Babur could not but have some respect for a strong Uzbeg ruler. As the master of Kabul he could not but crush or conciliate the Uzbegs. As Abdulla Khan remained friendly to him Akbar was not drawn into war in Central Asia.

The safety of Kabul also required the occupation of Kandahar, which was a place of great commercial and strategic importance. Nearly 14,000 camels with goods passed annually from India *via* Kandahar to Persia. 'The wise of ancient times considered Kabul and Kandahar as the twin gates of Hindustan, the one leading to Turkestan, the other to Persia.' The fort of Kandahar guarded the road to India from the west and to Kabul from the south. 'Its strategic importance lies in the fact that only 360 miles of level country separate it from Herat near which the lofty Hindukush range sinks down to offer an easy passage to an invading host from Central Asia or Persia. Such an army must pass through Kandahar and must be turned back there, if ever at all.' In an age when Kabul was a part of the Delhi Empire Kandahar was very naturally a bone of contention between the rulers of Persia and India. In 1595 the Persian Governor of Kandahar surrendered it to Akbar without fighting.

Kashmir was annexed in 1586, Sind in 1590-91 and Baluchistan in 1595.

Deccan Conquests: Having consolidated his position in the north-west Akbar could now devote himself to the conquest of the Deccan. A sense of security in the north justified a forward policy in the south. Towards the close of Akbar's reign there were five Muslim Sultanates in the Deccan—Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Bidar and Golkonda. Akbar did not concern himself with the territory south of the Krishna. In 1591 four missions were sent to Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golkonda in order to ascertain whether they would willingly accept the suzerainty of Delhi. Khandesh was the most important of these four Sultanates from the point of view of Mughal expansion, because it contained the celebrated fort of Asirgarh* which com-

* It was situated on a spur of the Satpura Range, and its natural strength was reinforced by three very strong concentric lines of fortifications.

manded the road to the Deccan. Ahmadnagar was the next accessible State. Raja Ali Khan of Khandesh offered his submission. But Burhan-ul-Mulk, the ruler of Ahmadnagar, was more contumacious. After his death his successor was pressed hard by the imperialists in the north and by Bijapur in the south. The imperialist generals—Abdur Rahim *Khan Khanan* and Prince Murad, Akbar's second son—quarrelled among themselves. They, however, laid siege to Ahmadnagar (1595) which was defended with great vigour by Chand Bibi, Queen Dowager of Bijapur and sister of Burhan-ul-Mulk. The imperialist generals thought it prudent to accept terms according to which Berar was ceded (1596). But intriguers at Ahmadnagar ousted Chand Bibi and violated the treaty. Bijapur sent a contingent to help Ahmadnagar, but the combined army could not win a victory over the imperialists in the battle of Supa on the Godavari (1597). Prince Murad died in 1599. Abdur Rahim *Khan Khanan* was goaded into activity by Akbar who came himself to Burhanpur. Chand Bibi was murdered about this time. Ahmadnagar was stormed in August 1600. The whole of Ahmadnagar could not, however, be occupied, and a prince named Murtaza continued to rule over a considerable portion.

In the meantime Miran Bahadur Shah, the successor of Raja Ali of Khandesh, had found the Mughal yoke galling; he thought of defying the Emperor from the impregnable fort of Asirgarh. Akbar marched on to the Deccan in July 1599, captured Burhanpur, and besieged Asirgarh. Here he could not use the contrivances so effective at Chitor and the siege became almost a blockade. The fort capitulated in January 1601. It has been said that the surrender of Asirgarh was due to the outbreak of pestilence. In fact it was taken by bribery, Miran Bahadur being previously made a prisoner in violation of a safe conduct promised to him. Asirgarh was the last of Akbar's conquests. Prince Daniyal was married to the daughter of Abdur Rahim *Khan Khanan* and left as the viceroy of the Deccan to govern the three newly acquired provinces (Berar, Ahmadnagar, Khandesh) under the guidance of his father-in-law.

Administration

Akbar and His Predecessors: Akbar had a genius for organisation and an extraordinary capacity for attention to detail. It has been said that in his administrative measures he merely walked in the footsteps of Sher Shah. Abul Fazl, on the other hand, has sought to belittle Sher Shah in his statement that 'he sought the applause of future

generations by mere revivals of Alauddin's regulations which he had read in the *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*.' V. A. Smith, however, remarks that 'from the time of Warren Hastings in the last quarter of the eighteenth century the newly constituted Anglo-Indian authorities began to grope their way back to the institutions of Akbar. They gradually adopted the principal features of his system in the important department concerned with the assessment of the land revenue. The structure of the bureaucratic framework of government still shows many traces of his handiwork.' In connection with the revenue organisation of Bengal it may be noted that when the Hastings policy of centralisation was abandoned and John Shore (in 1786) created districts as territorial units, he only revived Akbar's system of *Sarkar*. This is merely to point out that all successful administrators owe something to their predecessors, and even Akbar was no exception. Sher Shah's land survey, however incomplete, his extensive construction of roads and establishment of mint towns, must have helped Akbar materially in his administrative organisation. But there is also no doubt at the same time that Akbar's principles of government and the administrative system that he created differed essentially from the principles and system of his predecessors.

The Central Structure—The Sovereign: The centre of the whole structure of government was, of course, the Sovereign, and as Abul Fazl says in connection with the ambition of Muhammad Hakim, 'race and wealth and the assembling of a mob are not enough for this great position.' In Akbar's scheme of things the Sovereign must not be an easy-going man. He must lead a strenuous life. Akbar used to have three daily meetings, one an open court, another concerned with routine work, and a third in the night or in the afternoon in which there was a discussion not merely of religious matters but also of State policy and State affairs. All these meetings had a profound influence on general administration. A day was set apart for judicial cases. Before the Sovereign all important matters relating to appointments, increments, *jagirs*, *mansabs*, government grants, orders of payment, petitions of princes, governors, *bakhshis*, *dewans*, *faujdars*, and private petitions sent through nobles were submitted. Even when the Sovereign was on the move the daily routine was observed.

The Central Structure—The Ministers: The unrestricted use of the powers of a *Wazir* by Bairam Khan was a warning against the appointment of an all-powerful *Wazir*. The office of the *Vakil* was retained, but none of the *Vakils* after Bairam Khan exercised the powers and

influence of a Prime Minister. The office of the *Vakil* continued until the early years of Shah Jahan. It retained its dignity and status but was deprived of all real power.

Akbar had four Ministers—the *Dewan*, in charge of revenue and finance; the *Mir Bakhshi*, head of the military department; the *Mir Saman*, chief executive officer in charge of factories and stores; and the *Sadr-us-Sudur*, head of the ecclesiastical and judicial departments. In 1582 the post of the *Sadr* was deprived of much of its authority. But State affairs were not confined to these four ministers only and in council others were admitted. Other checks on these ministers were provided by the officers at court who were associated with State work, and the vigilance of the Emperor also acted as a check on the ministers. The four ministers of Akbar have been described as 'the four pillars of the empire, but not like the symbolical pillars of the Turkish Empire which held the tent but pillars like those of the Mughal Taj which do not support the structure but add to its dignity, majesty and beauty.'

Besides these ministers two other officers also counted for much in the central administration. They held the posts of *Daroga-i-Ghusal Khana* and *Arz-i-Mukarrar*. The former acted as a private secretary to the Emperor. The latter revised the Emperor's orders and presented them a second time for his sanction. Among other officers of an inferior status we may mention the *Daroga-i-Dakchouki* and the *Mir Arz*. The former was in charge of the intelligence department and the latter was in charge of petitions.

Akbar succeeded in establishing routine in his administration and '*Zabita nast*' ('this is not the custom') became a familiar phrase and tradition under his successors.

Rank in Mughal State Service

Mansabdari System: The bureaucracy was framed on military lines. The superior officers were classified in 33 grades ranging from *mansabdars* of 10 to *mansabdars* of 10,000. The highest grades (10,000, 8,000 and 7,000) were reserved for the three princes. Abul Fazl gives the following number—1,388 commanders from 150 to 10, and 412 commanders from 5,000 to 200. Most probably in Akbar's time *mansabs* under 200 and in Shah Jahan's time *mansabs* under 500 did not entitle the holder to call himself an *Amir*. The title *Amir-ul-umara* was, curiously enough, held by several persons at the same time. These formed the official nobility, the military and imperial service being

formed on one uniform *mansabdari* system. The *mansabdars* raised the troops they commanded. The grades fixed seemed to indicate the number of men which each officer was expected to bring, but effective strength had a tendency to fall below the nominal. Akbar recognised this divergence, and it was regulated by the introduction of double rank in his eleventh year—the *Zat* and the *Sowar*, i.e. personal and trooper rank. A further complication was introduced later by the introduction of *Sihaspah* (three horses), *Duaspah* (two horses) and *Yakasp* (one horse) gradation in the case of the higher *mansabdars* in their *Sowar* rank. 'The pecuniary advantage of triple rank lay in the flat rate per head which an officer received and the average rate at which he was able to secure his troopers. Triple rank might have been profitable as also an honourable distinction. From the military standpoint there were not three classes of troopers but only one and the distinction was merely of accountancy and ranking. Under Jahangir, on account of his laxity, trooper rank again ceased to be a military fact, and Shah Jahan again effected a drastic re-organisation by scaling the effective strength of contingents down to $\frac{1}{3}$rd or $\frac{1}{4}$th and reducing officers' salaries substantially. They could be paid either in cash or in *jagirs*. Akbar preferred to pay his officers by salaries rather than by assignments. According to Moreland's calculation, a *mansabdar* of 5,000 received a salary of at least 18,000 rupees a month, and a commander of 500 at least 1,000 rupees a month. Thus the *mansabdars'* salaries were very high. But they had to pay for their own military establishments. Akbar's standing army was small, not more than 25,000 according to Blochmann, though Father Monserrate's estimate is that in 1581 Akbar had an army of 45,000 cavalry raised and paid by himself and 5,000 elephants. The greater part of the army consisted of contingents furnished by the *mansabdars*. The *manasbdari* organisation included all public services—military, civil, financial—with the exception of the judiciary. A *mansabdar's* military obligation was indicated by his rank but any work in any department could be assigned to him. There was the system of constant transfer from one province to another. *Jagirs* which were assigned in some cases in lieu of pay were constantly transferred after short periods. According to Abul Fazl this was like the transplantation of plants which a gardener practises.

The Mughal nobility was a nobility by service. This was truly imperial in character. It had a moderating influence upon parochial elements. Group consciousness existed and normal recruitment was

not so much on the basis of talent as of family and clan. Hawkins wrote in 1608: 'The custom of the Mughal Emperor is to take possession of his noblemen's treasure when they die and to bestow on their children what he pleaseth but commonly he dealt well with them.' There was a regular department of the State, the *Bait-ul-Mal*, in which the escheated property was kept. As a consequence of this the nobles lived extravagantly and squandered money. The results were that private capital could not accumulate, and a hereditary independent peerage as a check on the monarchy could not develop.

Troops paid by the State but placed under the command of *mansabdars* were called *Dakhili* (supplementary). There was a body of gentlemen troopers who were individual recruits. They were called *Ahadis*. They were not distributed among *mansabdars* but were always placed under the command of a great noble assisted by a separate *Bakhshi*. An *Ahadi's* pay was very high.

Revenue System: During the early years of Akbar's reign several revenue experiments were made. After the revenue reforms of Todar Mal (1582) there were three principal revenue systems in the empire, which may be thus described:

(1) *Ghallabaksh* or crop division. Under this system a share of each crop was taken by the State. This system prevailed in Lower Sind, a part of Kabul and Kashmir.

(2) *Zabt* or regulation system associated with the name of Todar Mal. *Zabt* meaning '*jarib*' included measurement as also assessment based upon it. It extended from Multan to Bihar and in large parts of Rajputana, Malwa and Gujarat. 'The essence of this system was the determination of fixed cash rates payable in place of the fluctuating share of the produce on each unit of area sown with each crop.' It was necessary to measure and record the areas cultivated every season. The system rested on two factors: a schedule of rates called *Dastur* and preparation of crop statements. Land was classified into four types: *Polaj* (continuously cultivated), *Parauti* (left fallow for a year or two to recover productivity), *Chachar* (left fallow for three or four years) and *Banjar* (uncultivated for five years or more). Each of the first three classes was subdivided into three grades: good, middling and bad; the average produce was calculated from the mean of the three. Only the area actually under cultivation was assessed. The area under each crop had its own rate and the mean prevailing prices were taken into consideration. The revenue system was *ryotwari*. Akbar's demand was at the rate of one-third. The seasonal record was a laborious and

expensive affair and some of the cost must have fallen on the peasant. But the great merit of the system was that there were no assignments, no farming of revenues and no summary settlements. But 'orders issued in the eighth year of Aurangzeb's reign show that the assessor proposed each year a lump sum and applied Akbar's method only when a village or a larger area refused. The village as a whole became more directly subject to the assessors and the individual peasants to the stronger men among them.... In Akbar's revenue system there was no trace of rent in the sense of a sum payable for the right to occupy land; his revenue was charged not on occupation but cultivation. This system was still predominant in the days of Aurangzeb but by its side there was an alternative by which the peasant could compound for his revenue by annual cash payments agreed on with the authorities for the land in his occupation.'

(3) *Nasaq* or estimate. Past assessment determined the present. Abul Fazl writes thus in his *Ain-i-Akbari* about Bengal land revenue: 'It is not customary in this Suba for the husbandmen and Government to divide the crop. Grain is always cheap and the produce of the land is determined by *Nasaq*. His Majesty has had the goodness to confirm those customs.' Todar Mal was in Bengal for a period of two years during which he had the Afghan rebels to deal with. His residence was too short for an extensive and laborious survey. He collected the accounts of the *Qanungos* and in some places ascertained their accuracy by local enquiries. From these accounts he prepared the rent roll of the *Subah*. The *Nasaqi* system did not depend upon survey or seasonal records of produce. It resembled the *Zamindari* settlement.

Some other features of Mughal revenue system established by Akbar should be noted. Revenue concessions were made if land which was out of cultivation for some years was brought under cultivation. This land paid half or even less in the first year. There was annual increase till the fifth year when the standard revenue was assessed. If in a village wells were not usable and a person repaired them he was not to pay any land revenue but a flat rate per well which was annually increased till the tenth year when normal land revenue was to be paid. The advance of taqavi loans to the peasants for seeds or cattle encouraged cultivation. These strength-giving loans were recovered after harvest or by annual instalments. The State did not undertake irrigation works.

Provincial and Local Administration: The empire of Akbar was divided

into fifteen *Subahs* or provinces* and the Provincial organisation was a miniature replica of the imperial. The *Subahdar* or *Sipahsalar*, officially styled *Nazim*, was at the head of the Provincial Executive. He was assisted by the Provincial *Dewan*, *Bakhshi*, *Qazi* and *Sadr*. The *Dewan* was the head of the revenue department and held charge of civil justice; so, though he was subordinate to the *Nazim* in rank, he really served as a check upon him. At important centres, at the head of several *Parganas*, over the administrative unit called *Sarkar* there was an officer—the *Faujdar*—who gave the *Nazim* every assistance in his power in the administration of criminal justice and police and in the exercise of his military functions. Another officer, the *Amalguzar*, was in the area in charge of accounts, assessment and collection of revenue. In the big cities the *Kotwal* or prefect of police enforced law and order and discharged many of the functions of a modern municipality. In the rural areas peace was maintained by the *Faujdar*. 'The state of public security varied greatly from place to place and from time to time.' The local revenue was derived from minor duties on production and consumption, and also from taxes on trades, occupations, transports, etc.

The Central Government controlled the provincial machinery by dividing the authority, by reducing the duration of the office of the *Subahdar*, and by frequent transfers. It kept itself informed of what happened in the provinces by means of news-reporters, in public as also in secret. They sent their reports at regular intervals. All these reached the Emperor through an officer, the *Daroga-i-Dakchouki*.

Judicial System: The most important point to note about the administration of justice is that the policy of the Government was to discourage litigation for which no facilities were created. The ancient village organisation with all its Hindu institutions remained intact and the State had to concern itself mostly with the *Parganas*, *Sarkars* and Provincial headquarters. The religious character of Hindu law was responsible for the fact that even in urban areas civil cases of the Hindus regarding inheritance, marriage, etc. were decided according to Hindu religious law.

The Emperor's court was a court both of first instance as also of

* 1. Bengal (including Orissa). 2. Bihar. 3. Allahabad. 4. Oudh. 5. Agra. 6. Delhi. 7. Ajmer. 8. Multan (including Sind). 9. Lahore (including Kashmir). 10. Kabul. 11. Ahmedabad (Gujarat). 12. Malwa. 13. Khandesh. 14. Berar. 15. Ahmadnagar.

There were seventeen *Subahs* under Jahangir and twenty-one under Aurangzeb.

appeal. Most of the cases before him related to criminal justice rather than civil and his sanction was necessary in cases of capital punishment. The provincial governors also tried cases like the Emperor and the district *Faujdars* sent him the accused who were arrested by them. If after enquiry he found that the particular case fell under the *Shariat* he sent it to the provincial *Qazi*. He tried political offences himself and sent the revenue cases to the *Dewan*. He also exercised supervision over criminal justice. The Emperor appointed the chief *Qazi*, but he had little to do with the appointment of provincial or local *Qazis*. There was no judicial hierarchy under the Mughals. *The Muftis* explained Muslim laws and customs. The *Muhtasib* performed police duties and also acted as a religious censor. There were *Muhtasibs* in the capital as well as in the provinces. The *Qazis* were not confined to cities only; they were appointed also for smaller units. The Muslim laws of inheritance, marriage and divorce could only be decided by the *Qazis* and *Muftis*, but in the law of evidence and criminal justice Akbar introduced some modifications requiring that the *Qazis* should not rely exclusively on witnesses but on other sources of information as well. Besides being a judicial authority the *Qazi* performed various functions in the field of administration. He was the registrar for sale-deeds, mortgage-deeds, conveyances, gift-deeds, attested *farmans*, bail-bonds, surety bonds, etc. There was no idea of the separation of the judiciary from the executive. There was no independence of the judiciary.

Religion

Evolution of Akbar's Religious Views: Akbar's religious views went through a process of slow evolution. His soul was sometimes convulsed by genuine spiritual doubts. Badauni, who, far from being an admirer, was not even a friendly critic, tells us that the Emperor 'would sit many a morning alone in prayer and melancholy...near the palace (at Fathepur Sikri) in a lonely spot with his head bent over his chest and gathering the bliss of early hours.' From his childhood Akbar had contact with Sufism. His Rajput wives and Hindu courtiers gave him a glimpse into the world beyond Islam. The *Bhakti* movement had created a new atmosphere in India.

It has been said that Akbar was up to 1574 an orthodox Sunni Muslim. Then he came into contact with the liberal views of Shaikh Mubarak and his famous sons—Faizi and Abul Fazl—who made him a rationalising Muslim. At Fathepur Sikri he built a house of

worship (*Ibadat Khana*), where selected men representing various schools of religious thought—Muslim, Hindu, Parsi, Jain, Christian —used to take part in religious debates. These debates probably convinced Akbar that 'there is light, in all, and light with more or less of shade in all modes of worship'.

Determined to challenge the undue influence of the *Ulema*, Akbar issued the so-called Infallibility Decree in September 1579, which gave him the final authority to decide all questions concerning Islam. Neither this Decree, nor the propagation of Din-i-Ilahi, justifies Badauni's charge that Akbar renounced Islam in his later years. The motive behind the Decree was Akbar's desire to command the indivisible allegiance of his Muslim subjects, not the assumption of spiritual leadership. He did not found a priesthood. Badauni has criticised some of the regulations issued by Akbar concerning religious matters and customs; but a close examination of those regulations shows that they were not inconsistent with the fundamentals of Islam.

Din-i-Ilahi: Akbar is said to have evolved an eclectic religion of his own, described as *Din-i-Ilahi*, and he was its prophet between 1582 and 1605. This *Din-i-Ilahi* has been described as monotheistic Parsi Hinduism.

According to Badauni, Akbar was not very willing to include Hindus among the followers of his supposed new creed. In the list of eighteen principal adherents of *Din-i-Ilahi* we find only one Hindu name, that of Raja Birbal, and he cannot certainly be taken very seriously. This disproves the theory that there was a political move of unification of the warring creeds behind this new religion and that the Emperor wanted to alchemise old hate into the gold of love and make it current. In that case a deliberate attempt would have been made to include Hindus.

As a matter of fact, *Din-i-Ilahi* was not a proselytising religion. It was confined to a select few. 'It was a Sufi order of Islam within Islam depending on individual experience of the follower and only open to men who had attained a certain stage of development. Akbar was a Sufi like Sadi, Rumi, Jami, Hafiz, Fariduddin, Shamsuddin and others.' V. A. Smith's assertion that 'the whole scheme was the outcome of ridiculous vanity, a monstrous growth of unrestrained autocracy' is due to his reliance on Badauni and the Jesuit Fathers, and his own inability to understand that an autocrat was capable of self-doubting thoughts, spiritual dissatisfaction and a craving for illumination.

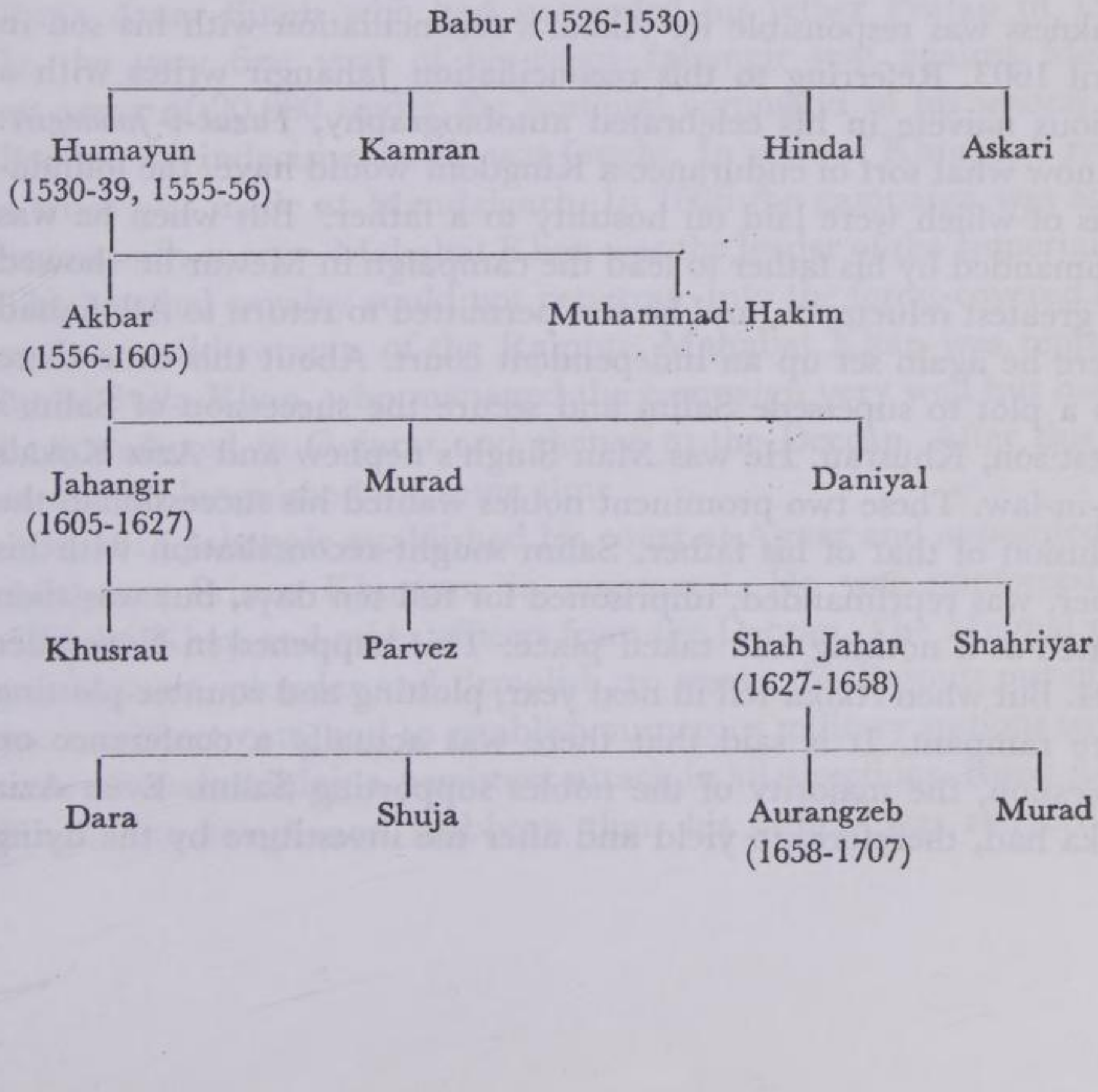
Policy towards the Hindus: With great originality and courage Akbar introduced several important reforms very early in his career (1562-64). This gives us a very good idea of the policy he wanted to pursue with reference to the Hindus. He abolished the taxes on Hindu pilgrims, forbade the enslavement of prisoners of war and abolished the *Jeziyah* on non-Muslims. The pilgrim taxes, according to Abul Fazl, amounted to millions of rupees. So the abolition of these taxes and the *Jeziyah* was a great financial sacrifice. No credit for these measures should be given to any adviser. As Akbar himself says, 'It was the effect of the grace of God that I found no capable minister (between 1562 and 1564). Otherwise people would have considered my measures had been devised by him.'

Akbar's principle was universal religious toleration (*sulh-i-Kull*). But apart from religious considerations, a sound political instinct dictated his policy towards the Hindus. His Hindu male relatives by marriage, like Raja Bhagwan Das, Man Singh and others, obtained very high ranks in the Mughal peerage and were treated with distinction as befitting their position as royal relatives. Hindu learning was encouraged, Hindu temples allowed to be freely erected, Hindu religious fairs permitted to be freely held and Hindu population not subjected to any special fiscal burden as a public badge of inferiority. Akbar knew that the Hindus formed more than three-fourths of the man-power of the State and their intellect, organisation and economic resources could not be allowed to deteriorate. Those who assert that Akbar was pro-Hindu and lay emphasis upon his so-called un-Islamic ordinances and point out that he had been hailed as *Jagatguru* (or the world's guide) by the Hindus should keep the following facts in their mind. Akbar succeeded in securing Hindu support, thus making Mughal hold on India much stronger than the control exercised by the Turko-Afghans. This was sound policy. At the same time he 'made a supreme effort to free Indian Islam from Arabicism and adapt it to the needs of India as the Persians had evolved Shiaism to make Islam suited to their national genius. With Akbar began a great religious and literary movement for the adaptation of Islam to the traditions of India and with Dara it ended.' His policy was national and rational. Under him the Turko-Mughal dynasty became more Indian than Turk or Mughal.

Estimate: A review of the career of this great architect of empire gives us an idea of the place which he occupies in Indian history. As Laurence Binyon puts it: 'Standing in the full daylight of history,

Akbar appears to us between two shadowy yet contrasted worlds; between the world of his Central Asian ancestors, a world of torrential human energy, idolising that energy for its own sake and possessed with the fever of hunt, whether of beasts or of men—between the world of furious action, passing like a dream, and the world of India, which could revel indeed in luxuries and cruelties but which could also produce the exalted spirits of Buddha and Asoka, speaking to us from a far remoter past than those wild conquerors but with voices that still live and move us. Akbar, too, is possessed with insatiable energy, he seems action incarnate and yet at the core of his nature is something alien to all that, something that craves for thought and contemplation, that seeks justice and desires gentleness.' What is more remarkable is that under Akbar the old Indian ideal of a united India again took shape and he strove to bring about not merely political unification but also cultural fusion. His greatest contribution was that he secularised the State at a time when rival religious sects were quarrelling among themselves. There was a new basis of imperial sovereignty in India.

Genealogical Table of the Great Mughals



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE CLIMAX OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

JAHANGIR

Succession: Akbar died on October 17, 1605. Before his death he invested Prince Salim with turban and robes and girded him with his own dagger, thus clearly intimating his desire that he should succeed in spite of his delinquencies. He was the only surviving son of Akbar, Princes Daniyal and Murad having predeceased their father. Salim's position in the later years of Akbar was indeed an intriguing one. Between 1601 and 1605 he gave Akbar much trouble. Taking advantage of Akbar's absence in the south he assumed practical independence at Allahabad in 1601, setting up an independent court, issuing *farmans* and granting *jagirs*. He induced Bir Singh Bundela, who was in open revolt against Akbar, to waylay and murder Abul Fazl, then proceeding from the Deccan to Agra, where Akbar had returned. The Prince suspected this friend and companion of his father of poisoning his ears against him. Akbar's grief knew no bounds, but though Bir Singh Bundela was relentlessly pursued, the Prince, who was the arch-culprit, was not punished, and paternal weakness was responsible for Akbar's reconciliation with his son in April 1603. Referring to this reconciliation Jahangir writes with a curious naivete in his celebrated autobiography, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*: 'I know what sort of endurance a Kingdom would have, the foundations of which were laid on hostility to a father.' But when he was commanded by his father to lead the campaign in Mewar he showed the greatest reluctance, and he was permitted to return to Allahabad where he again set up an independent court. About this time there was a plot to supersede Salim and secure the succession of Salim's eldest son, Khusrau. He was Man Singh's nephew and Aziz Koka's son-in-law. These two prominent nobles wanted his succession to the exclusion of that of his father. Salim sought reconciliation with his father, was reprimanded, imprisoned for full ten days, but was then treated as if nothing had taken place. This happened in November 1604. But when Akbar fell ill next year, plotting and counter-plotting were rampant. It is said that there was actually a conference on succession, the majority of the nobles supporting Salim. Even Aziz Koka had, therefore, to yield and after the investiture by the dying

monarch Salim had no difficulty in the matter of succession. He was solemnly enthroned at Agra on October 24, 1605, and assumed the title *Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir Padishah Ghazi.*

Revolt of Khusrau: The first important incident of his reign was the rebellion of Khusrau. Man Singh, who had actively supported the cause of his nephew, was absent in distant Bengal. Khusrau was in a state of semi-confinement, but he escaped from the Agra fort and marched towards the Punjab. His army swelled to 12,000. The *Dewan* of Lahore joined him but the governor of the city defended it. In the meantime the Imperial army arrived. A battle was fought at Bhairowal. Khusrau, completely defeated, escaped; he wanted to go to Kabul but ran aground in the Chenab and was captured. His prominent supporters were barbarously put to death. The Sikh Guru Arjan is said to have become one of Khusrau's partisans and to have offered up prayers for his cause. He was imprisoned and his death (1606) is said to have been hastened by the rigours of his imprisonment. Khusrau was blinded, but later on he partially recovered the use of one of his eyes.

Submission of Mewar (1615): Jahangir's reign is said to be a continuation of that of Akbar. He adopted his father's foreign policy both in Northern and in Southern India. The complete subjugation of Mewar was his first concern. Mewar was then under the rule of Rana Amar Singh who had succeeded his father Pratap in 1597. In the very first year of his reign Jahangir sent against Mewar an army of 20,000 under the nominal command of his second son Parvez. An indecisive battle was fought. In view of Khusrau's revolt a truce was made at Mandalgarh. In 1608 the campaign was again begun with energy. Mahabat Khan was the leader of the Imperialists. The Mughal cavalry could not penetrate into the forest-covered hills and the wild retreats of the Rajputs. Mahabat Khan was replaced by Abdulla Khan, who managed the campaign very well but had to be transferred to Gujarat and thence to the Deccan. After this the campaign languished for some time.

In 1613 Jahangir established his court at Ajmer and appointed his third son Prince Khurram in command. He was reinforced by Abdulla Khan and other officers from the Deccan. The Mughal plan was to burn, plunder and demolish, to starve the Rajputs out of the mountain retreats, and to establish numerous military stations with a view to maintaining a persistent attack in all directions. Rana Amar Singh, less tough and stubborn than his father, was reduced by

famine and pestilence to ask for terms. Jahangir was studiously conciliatory. According to the terms of the treaty of 1615, the Rana was to supply a contingent of 1,000 horse; his son Prince Karan was to become a *Mansabdar* of 5,000. The Rana was not to attend the Imperial court in person and no bride from Mewar was to enter the Imperial *harem*. The presents given to Prince Karan were so lavish that Sir Thomas Roe, the British envoy, formed an impression that the submission was bought with presents. Jahangir's treatment of the Prince of Mewar was a remarkable contrast to the treatment accorded by Aurangzeb to Shivaji when Jai Singh persuaded this arch-enemy of the Mughals to submit and attend the *Darbar*. The ease-loving and pleasure-seeking Jahangir knew the art of empire-building much better than his unsympathetic, thorough-going grandson.

Subjugation of Afghans of Bengal: The same conciliatory policy was adopted with regard to the Afghan rebels in Bengal. This easternmost Mughal province was in constant ferment. After Daud's failure Qutlu Khan, Isa Khan and Sulaiman in succession maintained the tradition of Afghan opposition to Mughal consolidation in this part of India. Successive Imperialist Governors—Man Singh, Qutb-ud-din and Jahangir Quli—found the Afghan rebels almost irrepressible. Islam Khan, who was the next Mughal Governor of Bengal, transferred the capital from Rajmahal to Dacca. Usman, a son of Isa Khan who had defeated the Imperialists at Bhadrak in 1600, was defeated in the battle of Nekujyal (320 kilometres distant from Dacca) on March 12, 1612. Usman died of his wounds. He was the last chief of the independent Afghans in Bengal. The conciliatory policy of the Mughals paved the way for the complete submission of the leaderless Afghans.

Annexation of Kangra (1620): Another notable achievement of Jahangir's reign was the annexation of Kangra. The almost impregnable hill fort of Nagarkot or Kangra dominated the hill country between the Ravi and the Sutlej. The hill chiefs in the country between Jammu and Nagarkot (Jhelum and Ravi) were brought under the control of the Mughals by Todar Mal. There is a current saying in the hills that Todar Mal explained his arrangements to Akbar by a happy metaphor that 'he had cut off the meat and left the bones'. But Kangra was not yet annexed. Rai Rayan Vikramjit succeeded in taking this fort in 1620 after a long siege. Jahangir describes the fort as having twenty-three bastions and seven gates. He was fascinated with the beauty of the valley.

Deccan Affairs—Ahmadnagar: Affairs in the Deccan during the reign

of Jahangir were dominated by the celebrated Malik Ambar, an Abyssinian by birth and a Deccani by adoption. With great administrative capacity, an excellent judgment and considerable military skill, he was the central figure in Deccan history for two decades. He wanted to save what remained of Ahmadnagar from being absorbed by the Mughals. He transferred the capital to Kharki, raised a scion of the reigning family to the throne under the title of Murtaza Nizam Shah II, and organising Maratha guerilla bands in large numbers, continued to offer opposition to Mughal expansion. His one notable success was achieved in 1611. The Mughals formed a grand plan of a concerted attack from different directions, but they failed to synchronise their actions. Malik Ambar concluded an alliance with Bijapur and Golkonda as the best means of foiling the Mughals. Mughal gold and Mughal diplomacy were incessantly at work with a view to separating the confederates. But the Mughal generals were also quarrelling among themselves until Prince Khurram was placed in charge of the Deccan affairs in 1616 after the transfer of Parvez to Allahabad. He succeeded in detaching Adil Shah of Bijapur from the Deccan confederacy. The entire Balaghat territory seized by Malik Ambar was ceded back to the Mughals and the keys of the fort of Ahmadnagar and other strongholds were formally delivered in 1617. Khurram got the title of *Shah Jahan*, but Mughal dominion did not extend a mile beyond the boundary of 1605.

Chaos and confusion continued to weaken the Mughals in the Deccan. Abdur Rahim *Khan Khanan* with his son Shah Nawaz Khan was in charge of the Deccan affairs; they could not control the quarrelling Mughal generals. Malik Ambar renewed his alliance with Bijapur and Golkonda and in 1620 broke the treaty of 1617. The Mughals gained victories but to no purpose. The Maratha guerilla horse organised by Malik Ambar swept over a considerable portion of Mughal Deccan. Malik Ambar even besieged Burhanpur. Shah Jahan was reappointed. His advent was succeeded by a vigorous offensive. The siege of Burhanpur was raised by Malik Ambar. Kharki was taken and demolished by the Mughals. Malik Ambar submitted; he ceded all the Imperial territory he had taken, together with some adjoining districts. It was arranged that *nazarana* would be paid by all the Deccan Sultanates—18 *lakhs* by Bijapur, 12 by Ahmadnagar and 20 by Golkonda.

In 1623 the Mughals concluded a separate treaty with Adil Shah of Bijapur who became allied with the Mughals. Malik Ambar as a

reply drew closer to Golkonda, concluded an alliance with its ruler Qutb-ul-Mulk, routed the Bijapur forces in Bidar, and even besieged Bijapur. The Mughals hurried to the help of the Bijapur Sultan. Shah Jahan, now a rebel against his father, joined Malik Ambar and besieged Burhanpur. Jahangir sent Parvez with Mahabat Khan to the south. Shah Jahan submitted and Malik Ambar had to fall back, but Mahabat Khan was at this stage recalled. The Mughal campaign in the south languished.

Malik Ambar died in 1626. 'History records no other instance of an Abyssinian slave arriving at such eminence.' This minister-in-chief of the Nizam Shahi dynasty is deservedly famous not merely for his successful resistance to Mughal advance in the south but also for his measures for public benefit—survey of village lands, registration of property, and revised assessments. He also unconsciously nourished the Maratha power into strength. Jahangir could do no more than re-occupy the previous conquest of the Mughal Empire in the Deccan.

Relations with Persia: Shah Abbas (1587-1629), the greatest of the Safavi monarchs of Persia, was the contemporary of Jahangir. He was certainly more able and more vigorous than his predecessors —Shah Tahmasp, the contemporary of Humayun and Akbar, and Shah Ismail, the founder of the Safavi line and who had once helped Babur. Shah Abbas wanted to regain Kandahar, in view of its commercial and strategic importance. The Persian attempt to take Kandahar in 1606 was not successful. The Persians next adopted the policy of lulling the suspicions of Jahangir. A Persian embassy arrived at the Mughal court in 1611, and the ambassador stayed there for two years. In 1613 a Mughal embassy was sent in return and in 1615 a second Persian embassy arrived at Delhi. In 1616-17 the third and the most magnificent of the Persian embassies arrived at Delhi. A fourth embassy with presents arrived in 1620. The Mughals believed in the peaceful professions of the Persians and perhaps neglected the defences of Kandahar. Shah Abbas suddenly besieged the great fort in 1622. There were at that time factions wrangling at Delhi. After a siege of 45 days Shah Abbas succeeded in taking Kandahar. Jahangir planned a great expedition for its recovery. But Shah Jahan, who was asked to take the command, could not go to such a distance and endanger his succession. He chose, instead, to rebel against his father.

Nur Jahan's Ascendancy: The most dominating personality in the Imperial court during the years 1611-27 was Nur Jahan, whom

Jahangir married in 1611. Tradition envelops Nur Jahan's career in a systematic romance. Meher-un-nisa (as Nur Jahan was called before her marriage with the Emperor) was born of Persian parents who had emigrated from Persia to India under very indigent circumstances. Her father entered the service of Akbar. Jahangir is said to have conceived a violent passion for her, but Akbar disapproved of the alliance, caused her to be married to Ali Quli Istajlu (who had the title of Sher Afkun or tiger thrower) and posted him to Bengal. Shortly after the accession of Jahangir, Sher Afkun stabbed Qutb-ud-din, Governor of Bengal, on the occasion of a visit to him and was killed by the attendants. The widow of Sher Afkun was sent to Agra, and some years later her marriage with the Emperor took place. An attempt has been made to knock the bottom out of this romantic story and to show that she actually caught the eye of Jahangir for the first time in a fancy bazar in 1611.

Charming and dominating, with her beauty and her abilities, she became not only the head of the female society of the capital but was openly recognised as a powerful political force. A new coinage was struck in her name with the following inscription: 'By order of King Jahangir, gold has a hundred splendours added to it by receiving the name of Nur Jahan, the queen Begam.' Her father, with the title *Itimad-ud-daula*, became practically the chief minister, and her brother Itiqad Khan, later styled Asaf Khan, was appointed master of the household and began a brilliant official career in 1611. In 1612 her niece, Mumtaz Mahal, daughter of Asaf Khan, was married to Khurram, who was likely to be the successor of Jahangir, as the ablest of his sons. The clique composed of Nur Jahan, Itimad-ud-daula, Asaf Khan and Prince Khurram dominated the court for the next ten years, although Jahangir was always a factor to reckon with. But by the year 1622 we find Itimad-ud-daula dead, and the masterful Empress and the ambitious Prince (Shah Jahan) open enemies of each other. The older nobility, of whom Mahabat Khan was the ablest, helpless up to now, sought to be more assertive. Politics became faction.

Rebellion of Shah Jahan: In view of the failing health of Jahangir, factious intrigues and manoeuvres characterised the last years of his reign. Ladila Begam, Nur Jahan's daughter by Sher Afkun, was married to Shahriyar, the youngest of Jahangir's sons. This worthless Prince served as Nur Jahan's instrument: she wanted to put him on the throne in place of masterful Shah Jahan.

The first portentous event was the death or murder of Khusrau. The tragic end of this unfortunate Prince occurred in 1622. He had been made over to the custody of Shah Jahan, who reported from the Deccan that he died of colic pain. Contemporary public opinion regarded his death as a case of murder.

Shah Jahan, who was responsible for this crime, if it was a murder, himself soon after felt the ground rocking beneath his feet. Asked to lead the Kandahar campaign, he thought it unwise to go to such a distance with his father in failing health and with Nur Jahan dominating the court and poisoning his ears. He proposed impossible conditions and then rebelled. Jahangir's opinion of him at this stage is thus recorded by the scribe, 'Shah Jahan is unworthy of all the favour and cherishing I bestowed on him.' Parvez was recognised practically as the heir-apparent and Shahriyar was put in command of the Kandahar expedition, which could not, however, be organised in view of Shah Jahan's rebellion. Shah Jahan was defeated in the battle of Billochpur in March 1623. He fled to Mandu and then to the Deccan, the Imperial army under Parvez and Mahabat Khan hunting him from place to place. From the Deccan he escaped *via* Orissa to Bengal, seized Rajmahal, entered Patna and took possession of Bihar. The pursuing Imperial army under Parvez and Mahabat Khan compelled him to raise the siege of Allahabad, and defeated him. He fled again to the Deccan, joined Malik Ambar, and besieged Burhanpur. As Parvez and Mahabat again approached, he raised the siege. He now asked for pardon, surrendered Rohtas and Asirgarh, the two forts he still held and sent his sons Dara and Aurangzeb as hostages. He was pardoned and given the government of Balaghat. This civil war lasted three years, and besides involving the loss of the lives of some of the best Mughal officers, postponed the recovery of Kandahar. In the language of Jahangir, Shah Jahan's rebellion 'struck with an axe the foot of his own dominion and became a stumbling block in the path of the enterprise'.

Rebellion of Mahabat Khan: Mahabat Khan, the man primarily responsible for the defeat of Shah Jahan, was regarded by Nur Jahan with suspicion. He was separated from Parvez and ordered to go to Bengal. He was asked to furnish an escheat account. His son-in-law was brutally treated. It appeared to him that his ruin was imminent. Jahangir and Nur Jahan were at that time on their way to Kabul. On the banks of the Jhelum Mahabat Khan surrounded the Imperial camp with his Rajput horsemen and captured the Emperor, intending

to secure his own terms. Nur Jahan tried to lead an attack on Mahabat Khan's men, but she failed and decided to join her husband in his captivity. So Mahabat Khan's *coup-de-main* was successful, but success was short-lived. The Imperial army, now commanded by him, proceeded to Kabul with the Emperor and the Empress. At Kabul Nur Jahan succeeded in releasing her husband by a strategem. It was now Mahabat Khan's turn to fly. He joined Shah Jahan in the Deccan. Shah Jahan in his distress was thinking of escaping to Persia, but events took a very favourable turn for him. Parvez died in October 1626, and Jahangir himself died in October 1627. Shah Jahan hurried up from the Deccan to secure his inheritance.

Character of Jahangir: Terry observes about Jahangir: 'Now for the disposition of that King it ever seemed unto me to be composed of extremes: for sometimes he was cruel and at other times he would seem to be exceedingly fair and gentle.' He was cruel enough to be able to stand by and see men flayed alive; at the same time he was gifted with a fine aesthetic taste and a real love of nature. His literary attainments are clearly reflected in his memoirs, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*. Probably intemperance blunted his qualities. In religion he was not a bigot, but he did not inherit his father's eclecticism.

SHAH JAHAN

Succession: Shah Jahan ascended the throne in February 1628. Between the death of Jahangir in October 1627, and the accession of Shah Jahan the attempt of Shahriyar to occupy the throne was frustrated by Shah Jahan's father-in-law, Asaf Khan. While Shah Jahan was hurrying up from the Deccan Asaf Khan set up Khusrau's son Dawar Baksh as a stop-gap Emperor, defeated Shahriyar and blinded him. On the approach of Shah Jahan, Dawar Baksh was allowed to escape to Persia where he became a pensioner of the Shah.

Capture of Hughli (1632): The Portuguese established themselves in Bengal towards the close of the sixteenth century. They established their chief station at Hughli (near Calcutta), which gradually became an important commercial centre. But they offended the Mughal authorities by exacting heavy duties from the local merchants, and they created consternation by kidnapping children whom they converted to Christianity. Under Shah Jahan's orders Qasim Ali Khan, Governor of Bengal, captured Hughli after three months' siege.

Many Portuguese were killed and a large number of them were sent as captives to Agra.

Deccan Affairs—Extinction of Ahmadnagar (1633): Shah Jahan, securely seated on the throne, was free to pursue a vigorous policy in the Deccan. Malik Ambar was dead and his son, Fath Khan, was not trusted by the Nizam Shahi monarch Murtaza II. He imprisoned Fath Khan and formed an alliance with Khan Jahan Lodi, an Afghan noble who was in rebellion against Shah Jahan. Shah Jahan decided to attack the various strategic points of Ahmadnagar simultaneously. At the same time the Maratha chiefs received great support and encouragement from the Mughals. Murtaza II in his distress released Fath Khan, who murdered him and set up a boy king named Husain Shah (1630). Fath Khan agreed to recite the *khutba* and to strike coins in the Emperor's name. The rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodi was suppressed. Mahabat Khan was appointed Governor of the Deccan. The new Nizam Shahi capital, Daulatabad, was captured with Husain Shah, the last King of the dynasty, in 1633. Thus the Nizam Shahi Sultanate came to an inglorious end.

Bijapur and Golkonda: A fresh complication now arose. The Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda tried to take advantage of the collapse of Ahmadnagar and seize their adjoining territories. Shahji, father of the celebrated Shivaji, set up a puppet Nizam Shahi monarch and governed in his name a portion of the Nizam Shahi dominions. He was encouraged and assisted by Adil Shah of Bijapur. Parenda, a very strong fort which was formerly in the hands of the Nizam Shahi Sultans, was now seized by the Sultan of Bijapur. Mahabat Khan attempted to take it but failed. He was censured by Shah Jahan and died of a broken heart in 1634.

The Emperor made a supreme effort to consolidate his position in the Deccan. He himself came to the Deccan to direct the operations in February 1636. Three Mughal armies totalling 50,000 were to attack Bijapur and Golkonda and another numbering 8,000 was to seize Junnar, Poona, Chakan and Konkan territories which were being administered by Shahji. Abdulla Qutb Shah of Golkonda was too timid to think of a stiff resistance. He promised to pay an annual tribute of 8 *lakhs* and recognised the Mughal Emperor as his suzerain. The Sultan of Bijapur, however, offered opposition. The Mughal armies entered into his territory and advanced, burning and devastating. Internal disturbances also distracted the Bijapur State. In May 1636, the Sultan of Bijapur agreed to a compromise. By the

terms of the treaty then concluded Adil Shah recognised Mughal overlordship and promised to respect the boundary of the State of Golkonda and to pay an indemnity of 20 *lakhs* of rupees; but no annual tribute was to be paid. He got a portion of Ahmadnagar territory including the Poona district and North Konkan, yielding a revenue of 80 *lakhs* of rupees. The rest of Ahmadnagar territory was annexed to the Mughal Empire. Shahji was hemmed in by the Mughals and their allies—the Bijapuris, and at Mahuli in North Konkan he had to make a complete surrender. He gave up the puppet Nizam Shahi and all the forts and territories occupied by him. He was allowed to retain a small *jagir* in the Poona district which he held as a vassal of Bijapur.

Aurangzeb as Viceroy (1636-44, 1652-57): The affairs of the Deccan were thus settled; the Mughal boundary as also the boundary of the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkonda were clearly demarcated. In July 1636, Shah Jahan returned to Northern India, leaving his third son Aurangzeb as the viceroy of the Deccan* with the seat of his government at Aurangabad. This town, originally founded by Malik Ambar at the village of Kharki, was named after Aurangzeb, who from his seat there administered the four provinces of which the Mughal portion of the Deccan was then composed. In 1638 the young viceroy sent an army to conquer Baglana, a small Kingdom on the main route from the Deccan to Gujarat, which was easily taken. Aurangzeb's first viceroyalty ended very suddenly in his disgrace and dismissal in 1644. Restored to favour in 1645, he was sent to Gujarat and thence to Balkh and Badakhshan. In the Deccan there was a succession of short and incompetent viceroyalties. Aurangzeb was re-appointed in 1652. Fortunately for the Mughals, nothing happened to disturb peace in the Deccan during the period 1644-52.

When Aurangzeb came to the Deccan for the second time in 1652 as its *Subahdar*, he found that the country had been very badly administered, the revenue had fallen off and the cultivated area had decreased. With the unsubdued States of Bijapur and Golkonda across the frontier, it was necessary to keep a large force in the Deccan. The income did not balance the expenditure and the young viceroy had to ask his father frequently for a subvention. This often led to financial wrangling between the father and the son. Aurangzeb, however, fortunately found a revenue officer of rare ability in Murshid Quli

*At this time Mughal Deccan consisted of four provinces : (1) Khandesh, (2) Berar, (3) Telingana and (4) Ahmadnagar.

Khan who made his administration memorable in the land revenue history of the Deccan. Murshid Quli Khan was an emigrant from Khurasan. As Aurangzeb's *Dewan* in the Deccan he was responsible for extending Todar Mal's revenue system to the south. But he modified Todar Mal's system to suit local conditions; in backward areas he did not insist on survey and assessment but recognised the old usage of fixed lump payment per plough or the method of sharing the actual produce. Murshid Quli's assessment was lenient. He re-peopled deserted villages and restored normal life. To re-organise ruined villages, capital was advanced when required.

Not content with success as an administrator in the Deccan, Aurangzeb was also eager to pursue a policy of aggression against the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkonda. He wanted to secure for himself and his supporters the immense riches and resources of these two States. Golkonda was very fertile, its capital Hyderabad was the centre of the world's diamond trade, and its monarch Qutb Shah was rich, weak and worthless. The Bijapur monarch, Muhammad Adil Shah (1625-56), ruled over a Kingdom that stretched from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal across the entire Indian Peninsula. He died in 1656 and the succession of Adil Shah II, a young man of eighteen, was followed by disorder, of which the ambitious Mughal viceroy was anxious to take full advantage.

War with Golkonda (1656): With Golkonda Aurangzeb had frequent causes of quarrel. The annual tribute was in terms of *hun*, a gold coin of South India whose exchange value rose from Rs 4/- to Rs 5/-. But Qutb Shah wanted to pay tribute at the old rate. He made extensive conquests in Karnatak (*i.e.* country south of the Krishna). The Mughal viceroy complained that this was done without the permission of his suzerain, the Mughal Emperor. Finally, the affair of Mir Jumla precipitated a war in 1656.

Muhammad Said, famous in history as 'Mir Jumla' (an official title of the Golkonda State), was a Sayyid of Ardistan in Persia. The son of an oil merchant of Isfahan, this Shia adventurer sought a career as a merchant in the Shia State of Golkonda and rose to be the prime minister of the State. He became perhaps the richest man in the south, the owner of twenty maunds of diamonds. With an excellent park of artillery manned by European gunners and effective—almost independent—authority over the Golkonda portion of Karnatak where he had secured an extensive domain, he overshadowed his own very incompetent sovereign Abdulla Qutb Shah.

A rupture between the two was inevitable, and Mir Jumla's son, Muhammad Amin, by his defiant conduct at the *Darbar*, precipitated it. He was thrown into prison in November 1655.

This was Aurangzeb's opportunity. Mir Jumla was already negotiating to join the Mughals. He and his son were appointed in Mughal service. On hearing of the captivity of Muhammad Amin, Shah Jahan issued a peremptory order for his release, and in case of his continued detention, the Emperor sanctioned the invasion of Golkonda. Already intent upon declaring war, Aurangzeb very adroitly used this conditional permission to achieve his purpose. He did not give Qutb Shah any opportunity to obey this peremptory order and treated his noncompliance as a sufficient cause of war. Golkonda was invaded in February 1656. Thus this war was not so much due to Shah Jahan as to Aurangzeb, and it would be wrong to regard this as the culmination of the policy pursued by Shah Jahan. It was preeminently the outcome of viceregal rather than imperial aggression, a forerunner of the policy to be pursued if the viceroy of the Deccan succeeded in becoming the Emperor of India.

The Golkonda campaign was short and swift. Prince Muhammad Sultan, Aurangzeb's eldest son, entered Hyderabad. Qutb Shah fled to Golkonda, which was besieged by Aurangzeb in person. The siege progressed slowly. Aurangzeb refused to make terms, arguing in his letters to his father in favour of annexation. But Qutb Shah's agent at Delhi succeeded in winning over Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, from whom the Emperor learnt the story of Aurangzeb's manoeuvre. The Emperor was indignant and issued peremptory orders to raise the siege. Peace was concluded on 30th March 1656. The Sultan of Golkonda paid a war indemnity as also arrears of tribute amounting to a *crore* of rupees and ceded a district. Mir Jumla came to Aurangzeb's camp and was thence summoned to Delhi, where he was appointed prime minister in the place of Sadulla Khan who had died recently. There was still one subject of discord with Golkonda. Qutb Shah regarded what was known as Hyderabad Karnatak as his own. The Mughals considered it as Mir Jumla's *jagir*.

War with Bijapur (1657): With Mir Jumla at Delhi the policy of aggression was triumphant there. Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijapur died in November 1656, and was succeeded by his young son, Ali Adil Shah II. Aurangzeb falsely represented to his father that Ali Adil Shah II was not really a son of the deceased Bijapur monarch

but a lad of obscure parentage, brought up in the royal *harem*. Shah Jahan sanctioned invasion, granting Aurangzeb permission to 'settle the affairs of Bijapur as he thought fit'. Bidar fell, Kalyani capitulated, and the way to Bijapur was open. The Sultan opened negotiations with the Imperial court, and Dara intervened on his behalf. Shah Jahan ordered Aurangzeb to make peace on the cession of the forts of Bidar, Kalyani and Parenda and the payment of a war indemnity of one *crore* of rupees. Soon afterwards Shah Jahan fell ill, and in anticipation of an impending chaos in Mughal affairs the Bijapuris refused to surrender Parenda.

*Central Asian Policy**: Balkh and Badakhshan were regarded as the heritage of Babur, and lay on the way to Samarqand, the capital of Timur and the scene of Babur's early triumphs and vicissitudes. The Mughal Emperors were so long preoccupied with their wars and conquests in Northern India and the Deccan. After the settlement of affairs in the Deccan in 1636, Shah Jahan felt that he was free to try to win the heritage of Babur.

Nazar Muhammad, the incompetent ruler of Balkh and Badakhshan, mismanaged the affairs of his State; rebellions broke out everywhere. Even his son Abdul Aziz was up in arms against him. Fearful of his security, he invited Shah Jahan to help him. A Mughal army advanced under Prince Murad in 1646 to take advantage of this turmoil. Badakhshan and Balkh were occupied. Nazar Muhammad in consternation started for Isfahan. But Murad, anxious to leave the dull and uncongenial land of Central Asia, returned to India, leaving his army leaderless there. Aurangzeb was then sent with Ali Mardan Khan, the Persian, who had surrendered Kandahar. Meanwhile, Abdul Aziz continued opposition to Mughal conquest and consolidation. The Mughals found it impossible to control the elusive Uzbegs who crossed the vulnerable line of the Oxus and attacked or sacked Mughal outposts. The Emperor at last decided to abandon Balkh; the fort was handed over to Nazar Muhammad's agents in October 1647.

The main reasons for the failure of the Balkh expedition were that the Mughal nobles did not like the idea of serving in that distant and inhospitable region. They had become too much accustomed to

*In Russian chronicles there is reference to an envoy sent by Babur to Moscow. During the years 1613-45 Indian traders settled on the Volga. In 1625 an Indian *serai* was built in Astrakhan. In 1695 a Russian trade agent visited India. (Nehru, *Discovery of India*, p. 308.)

a life of luxurious dalliance to find grim Central Asia suitable to their taste. They have been described as 'pale persons in muslin petticoats'. Moreover, they could not secure the sympathies of the local people. The expedition cost the Indian treasury four *crores* of rupees, but not an inch of territory was gained.

Relations with Persia: In 1629 Shah Abbas I of Persia died and Shah Safi succeeded. Safdar Khan, the Mughal envoy to Persia, informed his master that Persia was exposed to Turkish attacks as also to the incursions of the Uzbegs and the Astrakhans. Another envoy was sent to Persia to ascertain the truth of these reports, ostensibly to assure the Shah of the friendly attitude of the Delhi Empire. Ali Mardan Khan, the Persian governor of Kandahar, had his differences with his sovereign. He was persuaded to surrender Kandahar to the Mughals and was given a very high rank in the Mughal peerage. The Persians tried to recover it, but were repulsed. Fortunately for the Mughals, Shah Safi was busy compaigning against Murad IV, 'the fighting Sultan of Turkey', and when peace was concluded between Persia and Turkey, the Mughal position in Kandahar was already consolidated.

Shah Safi died in 1642. Abbas II, who succeeded, was a mere boy and there were troubles almost inevitable during a regency. The Mughal failure in the Balkh-Badakhshan campaign, however, lowered Mughal prestige and encouraged Persia. When Shah Abbas II came of age he made his preparations in great secrecy. Kandahar was invested by the Persians in December 1648, and occupied in February 1649. The failure of the Mughals was due to lack of vigilance as also delay in sending a relieving force.

But Mughal prestige demanded that Kandahar must be won back. The first expedition under Aurangzeb and Sadulla Khan with 50,000 troops arrived in May 1649. The fort was completely invested, but the lack of large cannon made it impossible to make any impression on the fort. Though in a pitched battle 39 kilometres south-west of Kandahar the Mughals signally defeated a Persian army, they had to raise the siege, and the Persian commander, Mihrab Khan, was an exceptionally able man.

A second attempt was made in 1652 by Aurangzeb and Sadulla Khan. The incidents of the first siege were repeated. The Indian gunners could make no impression on the fort walls. The siege had again to be abandoned. A third attempt was made in April 1653, under the leadership of Dara Shukoh. He had some success in the

preliminary operations, but in the end he had to confess his failure. Mughal inferiority in fire-arms was mainly responsible for this humiliating failure to re-occupy Kandahar. These three sieges cost more than ten *crores* of rupees; their failure ruined Mughal prestige and enhanced proportionately the military prestige of Persia. 'For years afterwards the Persian peril hung like a dark cloud on the western frontier of India.'

War of Succession (1657-1660): On September 6, 1657, Shah Jahan suddenly fell ill. A struggle for succession was a rule rather than an exception in Timurid history. But the war that now began was more sanguinary than the succession troubles in the previous reigns because the contestants were now almost equally poised, 'each of them having a princely train'. Dara, the eldest of Shah Jahan's sons, held the viceroyalties of Allahabad, the Punjab and Multan, which he governed through deputies. He was a commander of 40,000 horse and held an almost royal position as his father's chosen successor. Because of Shah Jahan's excessive fondness for him 'he never acquired experience in the arts of war and government; he never learnt to judge men by the crucial test of danger and difficulty; and he lost touch with the active army'. Shuja, the second son of Shah Jahan, was for seventeen years Governor of Bengal. Indolent by nature, but capable of great energy on occasions, he was incapable of any sustained effort. The third son, Aurangzeb, was the fittest of the brothers in this struggle for survival. Cold, calculating, adept in intrigue and trained in the school of experience, he was recognised by the courtiers as the ablest of Shah Jahan's sons, as the man most likely to emerge triumphant. The impetuous, pleasure-seeking, foolish Murad, the youngest of the brothers, was the Governor of Gujarat; with all his reckless valour he was no match for the deep artifice of Aurangzeb, with whom he formed an alliance at the very beginning of the contest.

At the beginning, on receiving the news of Shah Jahan's illness, the three brothers combined against Dara. With Murad Aurangzeb was in a position to act in concert. Shuja was at a great distance and it was not possible to co-operate with him directly. There was an agreement to meet near Agra. The ostensible object of this understanding among the three brothers was to free the Emperor from the yoke of Dara. Meanwhile Dara had begun to strengthen his position. He transacted all public business in the Emperor's name. Orders were issued to Mir Jumla and other nobles who were in the

Deccan to return to North India. A reshuffling of the provinces was projected.

Shah Jahan sufficiently recovered by the middle of November 1657. Events, however, moved very fast. Murad crowned himself at Ahmedabad in December; Shuja also proclaimed himself Emperor in Bengal. Aurangzeb, having completed his preparations and being joined by Mir Jumla with his excellent park of artillery, set out from Burhanpur in March 1658. He crossed the Narmada in April and was joined by Murad near Ujjain. Aurangzeb had already entered into a solemn treaty with Murad that, in case of success, the latter would get the Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Sind and reign over this region as an independent King.

The first battle of this civil war was fought at Bahadurpur, near Banaras, on February 14, 1658. Here Shuja was defeated by Dara's army, led by his son, Sulaiman Shukoh and Raja Jai Singh of Amber. Raja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur and Qasim Khan were sent to oppose the advance of Aurangzeb and Murad. The hostile armies met at Dharmat, near Ujjain, on April 15, 1658. The Imperial army numbered over 35,000, exactly equalling in strength the army under the two brothers. But there was no unity in the Imperial camp—Qasim Khan rendered no assistance to Jaswant Singh—and the valiant Raja of Marwar was not a good leader. Aurangzeb secured a decisive victory, which was naturally regarded as a good omen by his supporters. 'At one blow he had brought Dara from a position of immense superiority to one of equality with his own or even lower.'

The most decisive battle of the war was, however, fought at Samugarh, near Agra. After his victory at Dharmat Aurangzeb crossed the Chambal and met an Imperial army under Dara himself. In the battle (29th May 1658) the Imperialists numbered 50,000. But excepting the Rajput contingent and Dara's own troops the rest were unreliable, and Khalilullah Khan, one of the leading Amirs, had already been corrupted by Aurangzeb. No victory was perhaps more complete and no defeat was perhaps more disastrous. Ten thousand supporters of Dara fell in this fight and among the slain were Imperial commandants of highest rank—nine Rajputs and nineteen Muslim chiefs are mentioned by name. This battle really decided the war of succession.

The rest of the story is soon told. After the battle of Samugarh Dara fled to the Punjab. Aurangzeb entered Agra and the long captivity of Shah Jahan began in June 1658. In the same month

Murad was imprisoned by Aurangzeb; he lingered in the fort at Gwalior until December 1661, when he was beheaded. After Murad's imprisonment Aurangzeb proceeded to crush Dara. Dara for some time tried to hold the line of the Beas, but Aurangzeb successfully sowed dissension in his army. The unfortunate Prince abandoned Lahore, fled to Multan and thence to Sind, and then entered Gujarat. He wanted to make a dash towards Agra on learning that Shuja had advanced beyond Allahabad. On the way he received an invitation from Jaswant Singh who promised to join him with the Rathors. But Aurangzeb completely defeated Shuja at Khajwa on January 5, 1659, and by means of mingled threats of invasion and hopes of promotion won over Jaswant Singh with the help of Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Amber. Deserted by the Rajputs, Dara decided to hold the pass of Deorai. It was a hotly contested engagement, and Aurangzeb owed his success largely to Raja Rajrup of the Jammu hills and his people who were expert in mountaineering and who by a secret movement turned Dara's left rear (March 1659). After this defeat Dara fled to Ahmedabad and then retreated to Sind with a view to flying to Persia by way of Kandahar. Malik Jiwan, a Baluchi chief of Dara (near the Bolan pass), whose life he had once saved, was approached for shelter, for Dara counted on his fidelity. But the ungrateful chief treacherously arrested Dara and handed him over to the Imperialists. Dara was put to death on the 30th of August 1659.

Shuja, defeated at the very beginning of the civil war by Dara's army at Bahadurpur, was defeated again by Aurangzeb at Khajwa. He was then closely pursued by Muhammad Sultan, Aurangzeb's eldest son, and Mir Jumla. Shuja, however, secretly won the Prince over, and offered him the hand of his daughter Gulrukh Begam. The war continued in Bengal, Mir Jumla leading the Delhi army. Mir Jumla's strength continued to increase. Tanda, Shuja's headquarters, was threatened. Shuja had to abandon Bengal; in May 1660, he fled to Arakan with only forty followers. According to a Dutch report, he was slain there by the Maghs in 1661.

Prince Muhammad Sultan had in course of the Bengal campaign rejoined the Imperial side. He was destined to pass the rest of his life in prison. Dara's eldest son, Prince Sulaiman Shukoh, had fled to the Raja of Srinagar in Garhwal in 1658. He was captured in 1660 and killed by slow poisoning in the fort of Gwalior in 1662. Shah Jahan remained closely confined in the Agra fort until January 2, 1666, when he died a natural death. Aurangzeb's treatment

of his father 'outraged not only the moral sense but also the social decorum of the age'.

Estimate of Shah Jahan: Shah Jahan was neither a great man nor a great ruler, but on the whole he had a successful career which was brought to an inglorious end by the civil war of 1657-60. As an administrator he enjoyed a well-deserved reputation for justice and clemency. He did much to alleviate the sufferings of the people during the terrible famines which devastated the Deccan and Gujarat in 1630-32. He was, however, probably unconscious of the fundamental defects in the administration and economic systems of his empire. Bernier says that the oppression of the Provincial Governor 'often deprived the peasant and artisan of the necessaries of life'. The costly bureaucracy and the army imposed a heavy burden on the people, which was further increased by the splendid monuments erected by Shah Jahan. While the resources of the tax-payer were being systematically drained, the army was steadily losing its efficiency and prestige. The failure of the Mughal army in Central Asia and in Kandahar revealed disquieting symptoms of weakness which came into prominence in the eighteenth century.

In religion Shah Jahan's reign marks the beginning of that reaction which reached its climax under Aurangzeb. His intolerance was curbed to a great extent by the liberalism of his favourite son Dara, and daughter Jahanara.

Administration of Jahangir and Shah Jahan: Smith gives the following estimate of Jahangir's administration. 'The administration was not good. Every Governor could do much as he pleased and ruthless severity was relied on for the repression of crime.' He also dismisses the evidence of Manucci, the Italian traveller, that Shah Jahan governed his empire 'most perfectly' and relies upon Bernier's testimony to assert that the country was misgoverned. There is little doubt that Jahangir's laxity was responsible for considerable inefficiency in the *Mansabdari* organisation, but Shah Jahan, capable and masterful, was responsible for a drastic reorganisation. In the words of Moreland, though the quality of administration varied from place to place, its framework was substantially identical and there was uniformity rather than diversity.

In one respect, however, a departure from Akbar's system is visible. In the matter of land revenue 'orders issued in the eighth year of Aurangzeb's reign show that the assessors proposed each year a lump sum and applied Akbar's method of land revenue collection only

when a village or a larger area refused. The village as a whole became more directly subject to the assessors and the individual peasants to the stronger men among them. There was increase of pressure on the assessors and land revenue met the increased demand of the State . . . his successors insisted on the largest possible area of cultivation and raised the standard of the State's demand from one-third of the gross produce to one-half.'

The greatest check on officials and assignees was the fear of the displeasure of the Emperor, and everybody was anxious to avoid a scandal at the court. In the days of Jahangir, and more emphatically in the days of Shah Jahan, monarchical supervision was a factor to reckon with in administration. Shah Jahan was a kind and wise master, with a very respectable number of able officers around him. There are several instances in which he dismissed harsh and exacting governors on the complaint of the people. There was another check on official tyranny. What is forgotten is that in those days it was not so much the individual as the community that counted. Communal pressure on the revenue officers was a part of the traditions of the country. 'In 1616, an officer employed in the customs house at Surat did some violence to a leading Hindu merchant whereupon the whole multitude assembled, shut up their shops and after a general complaint to the Governor left the city, pretending to go to the court for justice but with much fair usage and fairer promises were fetched back.' There were many such instances. Besides the strong communal pressure we should also keep in mind the fact that there was a system of credit extending over a wide area which was independent of political limits and which served as a check on individual whims and caprices.

The great bulk of the revenue continued to be assigned to officers in the Mughal State service. William Hawkins, the first Englishman who held an assignment, gives us an idea that the assignments were characterised by instability. A new practice was introduced in the reign of Jahangir—the practice of making an *Altamgha* grant, which could be annulled only by the authority of the Emperor and could not be resumed or varied like other assignments in the ordinary course of administration. When Shah Jahan reorganised the finances of the empire he made arrangements that sufficient areas should be reserved for the treasury. The practice of assignment continued throughout the reign of Aurangzeb but towards the end the practice of farming the land revenue replaced assignments, when the Emperor could no longer guarantee the peaceful enjoyment of the assignment.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

AURANGZEB

THE FIRST HALF OF THE REIGN

The victor of Dharmat, Samugarh, Deorai and Khajwa was formally enthroned in June 1659, and assumed the title of *Alamgir*. A minor difficulty was caused by chief *Qazi* Abdur Rahaman who said that during the life-time of the father the recitation of the Khutba in the name of the son was not permissible under the commands of the *Shariat*. He had to relinquish the office and a new chief *Qazi* read the Khutba in Aurangzeb's name. His reign is divided into two almost equal parts, the first (1658-1681) of which was passed in Northern India and the second (1682-1707) in the Deccan. During the first half of the reign the centre of interest was in the north where the most important events happened. The north-eastern frontier, the north-western frontier and Rajputana were the scenes of Mughal military activity in Northern India. In the south Shivaji was during this period welding the Marathas into a nation in defiance of Mughal authority, though he was not formally crowned as an independent monarch until 1674. He kept the Mughals busy in the south during this period. During the second half Northern India was so much neglected that it became a place of secondary importance and the Emperor with his court, soldiers and best officers lived in the south where momentous events happened.

The North-Eastern Frontier: Mir Jumla was appointed viceroy of Bengal with orders to 'punish the lawless zamindars of the province, especially those of Assam and Magh (Arracan)'. The Mughal frontier had been pushed in 1612 to Goalpara and Kamrup in Western Assam, a Mughal *Faujdar* being stationed at Gauhati; but the Ahoms had violated this frontier, and the Raja of Cooch Bihar had also defied Mughal authority. Starting from Dacca in 1661 Mir Jumla annexed Cooch Bihar and entered Assam. In March 1662, the invading army reached Garhgaon, the Ahom capital; the spoils taken were enormous. The Ahom King, Jayadwaj Singh, being put to flight, the Mughal fleet completely annihilated Ahom naval power. But the rainy season enabled the Ahoms to attack the isolated Mughal outposts. Supplies failed, communications between the army and the navy were cut off by the Ahoms, and an epidemic broke out in the

Mughal camps. When the rainy season was over, Mir Jumla resumed the offensive and successfully won over some of the lieutenants of the Ahom King; but he fell seriously ill, the Mughal army itself now got almost out of control. A treaty was concluded on nominally favourable terms, the Ahom King agreeing to pay a heavy war indemnity and an annual tribute and to cede some districts. Mir Jumla died on his way to Dacca in March 1663. The districts ceded by the Ahom King were soon after lost to the Mughals, and even Gauhati was wrested from them four years after Mir Jumla's death. A long desultory warfare began between the Mughals and the Ahoms, which was, however, fruitless for the Mughals. The ruler of Cooch Bihar, who had recovered his dominions, was, however, compelled to cede Rangpur and Western Kamrup.

Shaista Khan, Mir Jumla's successor in the viceroyalty of Bengal, conquered Chatgaon (Chittagong) from the King of Arakan in 1666. The Arakanese were worsted in naval combats and Chatgaon was made the seat of a Mughal *Faujdar*. Shaista Khan also captured the island of Sandwip in the Bay of Bengal.

The North-Western Frontier: The Pathan clans living in the villages leading from India to Afghanistan and in the hills around rendered unwilling allegiance to the Mughals and were always ready to take advantage of a weak governor or a foreign war to raise commotions. The Mughal Government practically recognised the right of these hillmen—the Afridis, the Yusufzais, the Khattaks and others—to levy toll on the traffic between India and Kabul; but tribal risings were nonetheless quite frequent.

In 1667 the Yusufzais suddenly revolted, rushed down in large numbers, devastated Chuch and cut off communications between Delhi and Kabul, as also between Kabul and Kashmir. The Mughal general Muhammad Amin Khan, however, succeeded in quietening them by hard blows. In 1671 Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur was placed in charge of the important outpost of Jamrud.

There was a rising of the Afridis and the Khattaks in 1672. The Afridi leader Acmal Khan defeated Muhammad Amin Khan, Governor of Kabul, at Ali Masjid. Muhammad Amin Khan escaped to Peshawar, but ten thousand Mughal soldiers were killed and twenty thousand made captive and the Afridis secured immense booty. The news of the victory resounded far and wide. The Khattak clan, led by the poet-chief Khushal Khan, joined the Afridis and the movement was fast becoming a Pathan national uprising against the

Mughals. Shujaet Khan was appointed by the Emperor to quell the rebels. Jaswant Singh was to co-operate with him. Shujaet Khan, who had risen from a humble origin to high rank through the Emperor's favour, despised the advice of Jaswant Singh and was slain at the Karapa pass. To restore imperial prestige Aurangzeb himself came to Hasan Abdal in June 1674, and stayed there for more than a year directing operations. Now imperial diplomacy became as active as imperial arms. In spite of reverses the situation was sufficiently retrieved by the end of the year 1675 and the Emperor returned to Delhi. He found a very able and astute Governor in Amir Khan, who conciliated the Afghan chiefs, set clan against clan, broke up the confederacy under Acmal, bribed profusely and kept the passes open to traffic. But Khushal Khan Khattak, the warrior, poet and patriot, kept the flag of Pathan freedom flying until his own son betrayed him and he was imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior.

The Afghan war had far-reaching consequences on Aurangzeb's policy. It was ruinous to imperial finances. Its political effect was even more harmful. It 'made the employment of Afghans in the ensuing Rajput war impossible. Moreover, it relieved the pressure on Shivaji by draining the Deccan of the best Mughal troops for service on the North-Western frontier.' Thus the Afghans indirectly contributed to the success of the Rajputs and the Marathas.

Religious Policy: Aurangzeb changed completely the character of the Mughal State as it existed under his predecessors. When Aurangzeb ascended the throne Raja Jaswant Singh was the premier Hindu *Mansabdar*. Jai Singh occupied the second place. Raja Raghunandan was the imperial *diwan*. Raghunandan died in 1663, Jai Singh in 1667 and Jaswant Singh in 1678. The comprehensive State of Akbar was gone for ever. Aurangzeb wanted to make it an orthodox Sunni State, although the vast majority of its population consisted of Hindus. He deliberately pursued the policy of converting *dar-ul-harb* (non-Muslim country) into *dar-ul-Islam* (realm of Islam). The administrative measures adopted by him in pursuance of this policy were well calculated to alienate the sympathies of his Hindu subjects all over India. In 1665 an ordinance was issued fixing the customs duty at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the Muslim and 5 per cent on the Hindu traders. In 1667 the customs duty on the Muslims was abolished while that on the Hindus remained. In 1669 he issued a general order to Provincial Governors 'to demolish all the schools and temples of infidels'. In 1671 an ordinance was issued that clerks and accountants must be

Muslims, but as it was found impossible to run the administration without Hindu assistance, it was ordered that half the *peshkars* should be Hindus and half Muslims. The *Jeziyah*, abolished by Akbar, was re-imposed in all parts of the empire in April 1679, 'to spread Islam and put down the practice of infidelity'. This tax yielded a very large sum. In the province of Gujarat it yielded five *lakhs* of rupees a year. In 1695 all Hindus, with the exception of the Rajputs, were forbidden to ride *palkis*, elephants and thoroughbred horses and to carry arms.

Religious orthodoxy is seldom statesmanship. The reimposition of the *Jeziyah* must be considered as more disastrous to the Mughal State than was the revocation of the Edict of Nantes to the Monarchy of Louis XIV. Shivaji's protest against the *Jeziyah* was recorded in a well-reasoned and spirited letter. Raj Singh's protest shaped into a Rathor-Guhilot coalition against the Mughal Empire. The *Jeziyah* was abolished by Furrukh Siyar in 1713, but it was re-imposed again in 1717; it was, however, not continued by Muhammad Shah who considered it impolitic to offend his Hindu supporters. Thus this phase of intolerance did not long outlive the Emperor with whose name it remains associated. But Jat, Bundela, Maratha, Rajput and Sikh opposition could not have been so vigorous—and in some cases there would have been support instead of opposition—but for this abandonment of a policy which Akbar had embodied in the Mughal tradition.

Uprisings: In 1669 the Jats of the Mathura region rose under the leadership of a zamindar named Gokla and killed the Mughal *Faujdar*. They were cruelly suppressed; Gokla was put to death and his family was converted to Islam. The Jats rose again in 1686 under the leadership of Raja Ram, who was defeated and killed some years later. Then the Jats found an abler leader named Churaman, who organised a formidable rebellion after Aurangzeb's death.

Aurangzeb's policy of temple destruction led to a Bundela rising. The Bundelas were a Rajput clan settled in the tract which derived its name (*i.e.* Bundelkhand) from them. Bir Singh Bundela revolted against Akbar towards the close of his reign. Champat Rai rose against Aurangzeb in the early part of his reign; he escaped capture by committing suicide. His son, Chhatrasal, entered the Emperor's service and served under Jai Singh in the Deccan, where he found inspiration in Shivaji's heroic struggle for liberty and faith. In 1671 he became the leader of the discontented Hindu population of Bundelkhand. The opposition of the Bundelas to Mughal authority

became a feature of local history for half a century till the Bundelas and the Marathas became allies. Before his death in 1731 Chhatrasal was able to carve out an independent principality for himself in Malwa.

The Satnamis, a peaceful Hindu sect living in the former Patiala and Alwar States, rose in 1672. They were easily crushed by a large Mughal force.

Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, was executed on a warrant from the Emperor in 1675 and Guru Gobind Singh, son and successor of Tegh Bahadur, brought into existence the militant *Khalsa*, stamping on the hearts of his disciples an intense longing to be liberated from Mughal rule. A ring dance of repression and revenge became as a consequence a feature of Sikh history.

War in Rajputana (1679-1708): Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar died at Jamrud in December 1678. Aurangzeb decided to seize his kingdom, though two of Jaswant's widows gave birth to two posthumous sons at Lahore in February 1679. Mughal troops poured into Marwar, and as that State was without a head, no organised resistance could be offered to the policy of annexation. Indra Singh Rathor of Nagor, a grand-nephew of Jaswant Singh, was recognised as the dependent Raja of Jodhpur; but the Mughal administrators and Mughal troops remained in possession of the country.

Marwar is a desert land, but through it lay the best trade route from the imperial capital to the rich city of Ahmedabad and the busy port of Cambay. Its possession would drive a wedge between two halves of Rajputana and the Rana of Mewar would be taken in the flank. If it became a quiet dependency, Hindu resistance to the new religious policy which Aurangzeb henceforth intended to pursue would be weakened.

One of the posthumous sons of Jaswant Singh survived. He was named Ajit Singh. He was brought to Delhi and his claims were urged before the Emperor, who, however, ordered that the boy should be brought up in the Mughal *harem* and, when grown up, given a rank in the Mughal peerage. Faced with the danger of extinction, Rathor chivalry found its leader in Durgadas, who became the champion of an almost hopeless cause and led Rathor opposition to Mughal injustice to a triumphant success. The Emperor sent a strong force to seize Ajit Singh and Jaswant Singh's widows. The Rathors desperately resisted, and taking advantage of the confusion Durgadas slipped out with Ajit and Ranis in male attire. While the Rathors at Delhi continued the fight Durgadas rode post

haste. Another band of Rathors maintained a desperate rearguard action; the worn out Mughals gave up the pursuit and Durgadas with Ajit Singh reached Jodhpur (July 1679).

Aurangzeb now declared a milkman's son as Ajit Singh, dethroned Indra Singh and determined to reconquer Marwar. He himself came to Ajmer and sent his son Muhammad Akbar ahead with the Mughal army. The Rathors, after fighting one pitched battle in which they were overwhelmed, carried on a guerilla warfare from the hills and desert. The whole country of Marwar was occupied by the Mughals and placed under *Faujdars* stationed at convenient places. 'The emblems of religion were trampled under foot, the temples thrown down, and mosques erected on their sites.'

On the 2nd April 1679, the *Jeziyah*, abolished by Akbar, was reimposed on the Hindus. Maharana Raj Singh of Mewar was asked to enforce it; naturally he felt offended. The mother of Ajit Singh was a Mewar princess; she sent an appeal to the Maharana for help against the Mughals. Raj Singh prepared for war. The Emperor anticipated him and invaded Mewar. The Maharana abandoned the plains and even Udaipur, the capital, and retired with all his people to the hills. Udaipur and Chitor were occupied by the Mughals and more than 200 temples were destroyed. But the Mughal positions in Mewar and Marwar were isolated from each other by the Aravalli Range whose crest was occupied by the Rana, and he descended east or west as he pleased and dealt his blows. Prince Akbar was more than once defeated in surprise attacks. The Mughal army practically became motionless through fear. The Emperor in anger removed him to Marwar and placed Prince Azam in charge of the Mewar campaign. The Rathors troubled the Emperor no less than the Udaipur clansmen.

Akbar now joined the rebel Rajputs; he deposed his father by proclamation and crowned himself Emperor in January 1681. The diplomacy of Maharaja Raj Singh was responsible for this defection of Akbar. But the Maharana himself had died in October 1680. His successor, Jai Singh, was for some time inactive and this was responsible for the delay in proclaiming Akbar's decision. However, in January 1681, Akbar began his march on Ajmer where the Emperor was then staying. If he had made a dash Akbar might have realised his ambition. But he dallied and tarried on the way and the strength of the Emperor was in the interval more than doubled. Tahawwar Khan, Akbar's right hand man, was murdered. Then a

false letter prepared by Aurangzeb, praising Akbar for bringing the unsuspecting Rajputs for slaughter by the imperialists, fell as designed into the hands of Durgadas; the Rajputs suspected treachery on the part of Akbar, and galloped off. The confederacy was thus dissolved and Akbar had to fly as hurriedly as he could for dear life. Durgadas discovering the fraud took Akbar under his protection and escorted him to the court of the Maratha King Shambhuji, successor of Shivaji. Taking advantage of the dislocation of the Mughal plan of war caused by the rebellion of Akbar, the troops of Jai Singh ravaged Gujarat and Malwa. But the Maharana was already worn out. In June 1681, he concluded peace by ceding three *parganas* in lieu of *Jeziyah*. The Mughals withdrew from Mewar and the Rana was restored to his position.

With Marwar, however, the fight continued, the Rathors anticipating the Maratha method of fighting, their hovering and harassing tactics. This truceless war went on until a year after Aurangzeb's death, when Bahadur Shah recognised Ajit Singh as the ruler of Marwar. J. N. Sarkar comments, 'In the height of political unwisdom, Aurangzeb wantonly provoked rebellion in Rajputana, while the Afghans on the frontier were still far from being pacified. With the two leading Rajput clans openly hostile to him, the army lost its finest and most loyal recruits. Nor was the trouble confined to Marwar and Mewar. It spread by sympathy among the Hada and Gaur clans. The elements of lawlessness thus set moving overflowed fitfully into Malwa and endangered the vitally important Mughal road through Malwa to the Deccan.'

SHIVAJI AND THE RISE OF THE MARATHAS

Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha power which was more than any other responsible for the dismemberment of the Mughal Empire, was the second son of Shahji Bhonsle who had sought like Malik Ambar to stem the tide of Mughal advance in the Deccan but failed. The father worked as the champion of a decadent monarchy. The son, a born leader, drew the best elements of the country to his side, welded the Marathas into a nation and breathed a new spirit into his people; so what he built lasted long. His success was due to his constructive genius and the new spirit which he brought into existence. It was not due merely to the incompetence of his enemies.

The Maratha Country and People: The Maratha country, the home of the Maratha people, is almost locked among hills. Great mountain ranges enclose it on two sides—the Sahyadri Range running from north to south and the Satpura and Vindhya Ranges from east to west. Minor ranges creek out from these parent chains. The country comprises three original divisions—*Konkan*, a narrow strip of land between the Western Ghats (Sahyadri) and the sea; *Maval*, a belt of land 20 miles in breadth, to the east of the Ghats, extremely rugged; *Desh*, further to the east, a vast rolling blacksoil plain. The hilltops constituted natural fortresses, well provided with water. The people were simple, active, self-reliant.

After the Muslim conquest of the Deccan many Maratha chiefs rose to distinction as leaders of mercenary troops in the service of the Sultans of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golkonda. 'A remarkable community of language, creed and life was attained in Maharastra in the seventeenth century even before political unity was conferred by Shivaji.' A great religious and social movement, tolerant and catholic, associated with the names of Tukaram, Ramdas and other saints and prophets, prepared the ground for the political upheaval under Shivaji.

Early Life of Shivaji: Shivaji was born in the hill fort of Shivner near Junnar on 6th April 1627, or, as some say, on 19th February 1630. His mother, Jija Bai, was the neglected wife of Shahji. Her deeply religious, almost ascetic, character exercised great influence on her son. Shahji entered Bijapur service in 1636 and was sent away to the Tungabhadra region in Mysore, and later to the Madras coast, to conquer new lands for Bijapur. He took with him his favourite wife Tuka Bai and her son Vyankoji; Shivaji was left with his mother to live at Poona in charge of Dadaji Kond Dev. The weight of evidence is in favour of the view that Shivaji grew up unlettered, though he mastered the contents of the two great Hindu 'Epics'. Dadaji Kond Dev died in 1647 and Shivaji became his own master.

Shivaji and Bijapur: Shivaji had already embarked upon his career of adventure and peril. He took Torna from Bijapur in 1646, built a new fort at Rajgarh, and took Kondana from a Bijapur agent. Shahji was imprisoned in consequence of all this activity of Shivaji, or according to another view, for his own insubordination. Shivaji is said to have approached Murad, the Mughal Prince, on his father's behalf, but Shahji's release was actually due to the mediation of two leading nobles of Bijapur. Shivaji kept quiet for some years (1650-55) but

acquired during this period the strong fort of Purandar. In 1656 he annexed Jawli, which had barred the path of his ambition in the south. The conquest of Jawli was facilitated and completed by a series of premeditated murders committed with Shivaji's previous approval by his trusted agents. Like Sher Shah using treachery in gaining the forts of South Bihar, Shivaji also paved his way by fraud intermixed with force. His recruiting ground was doubled and his door to the south opened.

When Aurangzeb, the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan, opened his campaign against Bijapur in 1657, an attempt was made to win over Shivaji. But this rebel against Bijapur authority had perhaps already decided to pursue a line of his own and made a diversion in favour of Bijapur by raiding the south-western corner of Mughal Deccan, while Aurangzeb was busy besieging Kalyani. Aurangzeb was furious when he heard of the disturbances created by Shivaji. A Mughal army sent against him defeated him but could not do much as the rains set in. Then came the news of the illness of Shah Jahan. Before leaving the Deccan Aurangzeb received Shivaji's offer of submission with outward pleasure but without granting formal pardon.

Between 1657 and 1659 Shivaji conquered the Northern Konkan from Mahuli to near Mahad. The Bijapur State, relieved from the pressure of the Mughal invasion, was now free to plan the subjugation of Shivaji. Afzal Khan, one of the leading generals of Bijapur, was sent against him. He was instructed to effect the capture of or murder Shivaji by pretending friendship. But Shivaji killed him in an interview (November 10, 1659). The weight of recorded evidence is in favour of the view that it was a case of 'preventive murder'. The Bijapur camp was plundered. The Marathas now poured into the South Konkan and the Kolhapur district. In July 1660, Shivaji was, however, compelled to evacuate the Panhala fort by a Bijapur force.

Shivaji and the Mughals: Under instructions from Aurangzeb his maternal uncle Shaista Khan, the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan, began his campaign against Shivaji early in 1660, occupied Poona, and captured the fort of Chakan and the Kalyan district in the North Konkan. Shivaji patched up a truce with Bijapur and made himself free to face the Mughals. One night in April 1663, Shivaji surprised and wounded the Mughal viceroy 'in the heart of his camp, in his very bed chamber within the inner ring of his bodyguard', slew one of his sons, wounded two others, and escaped. This successful night attack immensely increased the prestige of Shivaji. In January 1664, he

sacked and plundered the rich port of Surat and carried off an immense booty.

The Emperor transferred Shaista Khan for his negligence and incapacity to Bengal and sent his ablest Hindu and Muhammadan generals, Jai Singh and Dilir Khan, against Shivaji (1665). Jai Singh managed the Bijapur Sultan very carefully, playing upon his hopes and fears in order to induce him to remain neutral in the war against Shivaji. With money and promises of high rank he sought to win over Shivaji's partisans. Having prepared the ground by his diplomacy he laid siege to the fort of Purandar. Flying columns ravaged Shivaji's villages. Maratha efforts to raise the siege were frustrated. Such a steady pressure was maintained that the fall of Purandar became only a question of time. But the families of Shivaji's officers were sheltered there. The fall of Purandar would mean their captivity and dishonour. Shivaji had to yield. He interviewed Jai Singh and concluded the treaty of Purandar in June 1665. Shivaji ceded 23 of his forts and lands yielding annually 4 *lakhs* of *huns* (1 *hun*=4 rupees). He retained 12 forts (including Rajgarh) and territory yielding one *lakh* of *huns* on condition of service and loyalty to the Mughal throne. He begged to be excused from attending the *Darbar* but proposed to send his son with a contingent of 5,000 horse for service under the Emperor.

After this triumph over Shivaji, Jai Singh began his campaign against Bijapur. He thought it expedient to induce Shivaji with the most solemn oath and promises of high reward to go to the Imperial court. In view of the fact that Adil Shah and Qutb Shah united against the Mughals, Jai Singh was anxious to prevent a possible combination of the Deccani Sultans with Shivaji. Shivaji accepted Jai Singh's assurances, left his mother as regent during his absence and reached Agra in May 1666. He was not treated with the honour and consideration which Jai Singh had promised and which Shivaji thought he had a right to expect. He protested in the open court and later charged the Emperor with breach of faith. He was forbidden the court and placed under restraint. The letters written by Ram Singh, son of Jai Singh, to his father, preserved at Jaipur, prove that there was a Mughal plan to send him on Mughal service to the north-western frontier and it was even arranged that he would be killed there. Shivaji, however, escaped by a stratagem from Agra and marched with a rapidity that could not be surpassed, by the shortest route through Gondwana to the Deccan, where he reached in November

1666. So rapid was his march that it told upon his health and he fell seriously ill at Raigarh immediately after his return. In his last will Aurangzeb is said to have written, 'Negligence for a single moment becomes the cause of disgrace for long years. The escape of the wretch Shiva took place through my carelessness and I have to labour hard [against the Marathas] to the end of my life [as the result of it].' The great Emperor was only conscious of his negligence. He was incapable of feeling that generosity and sympathy might have converted this foe into a friend. Cunning statecraft is not statesmanship.

For three years after his return from Agra Shivaji lived very quietly at home and made his peace with the Mughals in 1668. The Emperor recognised his title of 'Raja' but did not restore his forts. The Yusufzai rising in Peshawar kept the Mughal army busy. During these years of peace Shivaji laid the foundations of his governmental organisation. In 1670 he renewed his war with the Mughals, recovered several of his forts and looted the rich port of Surat for the second time, his first sack of Surat having taught him that this place would supply him the means of war. Prince Muazzam, the Mughal Governor of the Deccan, quarrelled with his associate Dilir Khan. The Prince himself was inactive and Shivaji was almost free to do what he liked. Shivaji defeated the Mughal general Daud Khan and made raids into Berar and Baglana. His campaigns against the Mughals in 1671-73 were very successful. He crowned himself with the greatest pomp and ceremony at Raigarh on 6th June 1674, and assumed the title of *Chhatrapati*.

Meanwhile the Mughals were finding the greatest difficulty in holding their own against the Afghans in the north-west. Ali Adil Shah II was dead and quarrels had broken out at Bijapur between the Deccani and Afghan parties. Bahadur Khan, Mughal Governor of the Deccan, tried to fish in troubled waters. He came to terms with Shivaji. With Golkonda Shivaji entered into an alliance, its powerful *Wazir* Madanna Pandit being anxious to co-operate with him. The Sultan of Golkonda was to pay Shivaji 4½ *lakhs* a month and help him with 5,000 men under one of his generals. Shivaji promised to give his ally those parts of the Carnatic which had not belonged to his father Shahji. The defensive alliance against the Mughals was strengthened. For this Golkonda agreed to pay an annual subsidy of one *lakh hun*. In 1677 Shivaji took Gingi, Vellore and other important places, advancing as far as Cuddalore. His half-brother, Ekoji, was the ruler of Tanjore. Shivaji seized some portions of Tanjore territory. The operations of 1677 and 1678 brought him territory in the Carnatic

worth 20 *lakh hun* a year and included a hundred forts. Ekoji was also weaned away from his subordination to Bijapur. Shivaji returned to Panhala in April 1678, *via* Mysore, whose northern, eastern and central parts he conquered, leaving an army of occupation in the newly conquered territory. He died on April 3, 1680.

Extent of Territory: 'At the time of his death Shivaji's kingdom included all the country (except the Portuguese possessions) stretching from Ramnagar (Dharampur in the Surat region) in the north to Karwar or the Gangavati river in the Bombay district of Kanara in the south. Its eastern boundary included Baglana in the north, then ran southward along an irregular shifting line through the middle of the Nasik and Poona districts and encircled the whole of the Satara and much of the Kolhapur districts. A recent but permanent acquisition was the Western Karnatak or the Kanarese-speaking country extending from Belgaum to the bank of the Tungabhadra opposite the Bellary district of the Madras Presidency.' Besides this he was also in possession of the northern, central and eastern portions of Mysore as also some adjoining districts—Bellary, Chittur and Arcot.

Civil Administration: Shivaji governed with the assistance of a council of eight Ministers (*Ashta Pradhāna*) composed of the *Peshwā* or the *Mukhya Pradhāna*, *the Mazumdar* or the *Amātya*, the *Wakianavis* or the *Mantrī*, the *Dabir* or the *Sāmanta*, the *Surnis* or the *Sachiva*, the *Senāpati*, the *Pandit Rāo* and the *Nyāyādhīsa*.The *Peshwā* was the Prime Minister; the other Ministers held departmental charges such as finance, record-keeping, correspondence, foreign affairs, army, religious questions and charities, and justice. All the eight Ministers, with the exception of *Nyāyādhīsa* and *Pandit Rāo*, were also actually employed on military business; during their absence on military duty their work at the capital was performed by deputies. These *Pradhānas* could not select their own subordinates, who were selected by the head of the State. During the Peshwa period these offices became hereditary but in Shivaji's time they were not appointed even for life. They were liable to be dismissed at the King's pleasure. The King was the pivot on which rested the whole administration. Everything depended on his personal ability. The Ministers formed an advisory body and carried out the King's instructions and supervised the work of the departments.

Shivaji's kingdom was divided into several provinces (*prānt*), each of which was subdivided into *parganas* and *tarafs*. The village was the

lowest unit. Shivaji left village communities undisturbed in their internal organisation. Over a group of these units there were hereditary *Deshmukhs* and *Deshpandes*. Shivaji tried to put an end to this state of things without revolutionising the existing arrangements. He appointed his own revenue officers but the *Deshmukhs* and *Deshpandes* were left in enjoyment of their perquisites. He prohibited their building of castles and demolished some of their strongholds. Shivaji abolished the intermediate revenue agency and adopted Malik Ambar's revenue system with modifications to suit his territory. His officer Annaji Datto was responsible for an elaborate survey and fixed the rent at 33 per cent of the gross produce. Shivaji later on demanded a consolidated rent of 40 per cent.

Shivaji also realised military contributions termed *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* from regions not recognising his sovereignty; these contributions amounted to one-fourth and one-tenth of the standard assessment of the place. 'The payment of the *chauth* merely saved a place from the unwelcome presence of the Maratha soldiers and civil underlings, but did not impose on Shivaji any corresponding obligation to guard the district from foreign invasion or internal disorder.' The realisation of such contribution was justified by the exigencies of the situation. Shivaji could not realise a large revenue from the hilly lands of the Maratha country. He had to fight with the Mughals, Bijapur, the Sidis of Janjira, the Portuguese of Goa and petty semi-independent chiefs like the Koli Rajas. He had to organise an army, to build forts, to defend the newly acquired territories, to equip a fleet and to put down pirates. He had to make war pay for war.

Military System: Shivaji's Mawalis and Hetkaris have become famous in the military annals of India. Shivaji selected them after a personal examination and each man was trained in the school of experience. His army was mostly composed of light infantry and light cavalry admirably well adapted to guerilla warfare and hill campaign. The cavalry was divided into two classes: *Bargirs* and *Silahdars*. The *Bargir* was equipped with horse and arms by the State while the *Silahdar* brought his own horse. He never allowed his army to be encumbered with heavy arms or costly camp equipage. No one was allowed to keep a woman in the camp. A breach of this rule was punished capitally. The booty of every soldier was to be handed over to the State. Shivaji paid his soldiers either in cash or by assignment in the district governments. He did not pay by *jagir*. He enforced strict discipline in his army and it was admirably efficient.

Forts played a very important part in Shivaji's military system. Every fort was under three officers of equal status—the *Havaldar*, the *Sabnis*, the *Sarnobat*—each of whom served as a check on the others. At the time of Shivaji's death there were 240 forts in his possession. Every important pass in the territory directly under his possession was commanded by forts.

It has been said that after the conquest of the Konkan Shivaji 'put the saddle on the ocean'. 400 vessels of various sizes and classes —ghurabs, gallivats, river crafts—were formed into two squadrons commanded by two admirals. With the Sidis of Janjira Shivaji's navy maintained a continuous fight. His fleet was manned by the Kolis and other sea-faring tribes of Malabar. His principal port was Malwan. The naval spirit roused by Shivaji did not die with him. The Angrias maintained the naval reputation of the Marathas till the middle of the eighteenth century.

Achievements of Shivaji: Shivaji's career and achievements and the subsequent success of the Maratha power cannot be explained by the standard theory of adventure and freebooting or the illustration of a sudden conflagration. Warren Hastings and Sir Charles Metcalfe noted later that the Marathas were differentiated from the rest of the Indian people by the persistence of patriotism under all vicissitudes. It would not, therefore, be wrong to say that the impulse given by Shivaji endured in a sense for about a century and a half. The imperishable achievement of his life was the welding of the Marathas into a nation and the new spirit which he breathed into his people. In the words of a contemporary, he elevated the Maratha nation consisting of 96 clans to an unheard of dignity. He created a compact military State with an excellent administration. Himself a devout Hindu, he observed toleration of all creeds, a chivalry to women and a strict enforcement of morality in the camp which even hostile critics admired. But in the eighteenth century we come across not a compact military State but a loose confederacy, not an admirably well-disciplined army but a disreputable rabble. If many of his institutions failed to survive him we must seek an explanation for that in the subsequent history of the Marathas. But it was the spirit created by Shivaji that was responsible for the fact that the 'Marathas bore the brunt of the attack of the Mughal Empire at the zenith of its splendour' and surprised the British statesmen even in the second half of the eighteenth and the opening years of the nineteenth century by their persistent 'reluctance to be connected with them'.

Deccan Policy of the First Half of the Reign: During the period 1658-81 Aurangzeb achieved no decisive result in the Deccan except in 1665, when Jai Singh compelled Shivaji to conclude the treaty of Purandar. The reasons that can be assigned for this lack of achievement in the south during the first half of the reign are the following: Prince Shah Alam, who was Governor of the Deccan for eleven years, was timid and unenterprising. His chief lieutenant Dilir Khan was openly opposed to him, and so inveterate was their hostility that Mughal Deccan seemed to be torn by civil war. Moreover, the Emperor was much too preoccupied with his wars with the north-western frontier tribes and the Rajput States to be able to send a sufficient supply of men and money and to devote sufficient attention to the affairs of the Deccan. The three Deccani powers—Bijapur, Golkonda and the Marathas—could no longer be pitted against one another. After 1662 there was some sort of understanding between Shivaji and the Government of Bijapur, and Shivaji did not molest the heart of the Bijapur Kingdom. The Sultan of Golkonda was Shivaji's ally.

But events brought a complete change in Imperial policy after Shivaji's death. The rebel Prince Akbar fled to the court of Shambhuji, son and successor of Shivaji. Aurangzeb decided to go to the Deccan himself to crush Shambhuji and overpower Akbar. He arrived at Aurangabad on 22nd March 1682. With him came three of his sons and all his best generals; the resources of the Mughal Empire were concentrated in the south. Extensive operations were planned against the Maratha King and the rebel Mughal Prince; but the Emperor, with his faith in his family shaken, was 'hesitating, suspicious, watchful and seemingly capricious and self-contradictory'.

Shambhuji (1680-1689): Shivaji was succeeded by his brave but pleasure-loving son Shambhuji, who did not fully realise the gravity of the Mughal menace. Instead of concentrating his strength against the Emperor he frittered it away in desultory campaigns against smaller enemies like the Portuguese and the Sidis of Janjira. Prince Akbar, estranged from the violent and capricious Maratha King, embarked for Persia in 1687. While Shambhuji was sunk in pleasure, his administration was hopelessly disorganised by internal rebellions and court intrigues. When Aurangzeb directed the full strength of the empire against Bijapur and Golkonda, Shambhuji made no

attempt to avert their fall, although he must have known that it was a danger common to all the Deccani powers. For the time being his sporadic raids were rightly ignored by the Emperor, who turned his attention seriously to the Marathas after the fall of Bijapur and Golkonda. Shambhuji himself was captured by a Mughal general while enjoying an 'unguarded life of debauchery' at Sangameswar. He was put to death with horrible torture in March 1689. Many of the Maratha forts, including Raigarh, Shivaji's capital, were captured, and Shambhuji's entire family, including his minor son Shahu, fell into Aurangzeb's hands.

Annexation of Bijapur (1686) *and Golkonda* (1687): After his arrival in the Deccan Aurangzeb wasted about four years in fruitless attempts to capture Prince Akbar and in half-hearted operations against the Marathas. Then he decided to conquer Bijapur and Golkonda. Bijapur was besieged in April 1685, and captured in September 1686. Golkonda was besieged in January 1687, and captured through bribery in September 1687. The last Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi Sultans passed their remaining years in the State prison of Daulatabad; their territories were annexed to the Mughal Empire.

Aurangzeb has been blamed for the annexation of Bijapur and Golkonda; it has been argued that these Muslim Kingdoms might have helped him in crushing the Marathas. It is very doubtful, however, whether these decadent Sultanates could have stood successfully against the new-born Maratha people. Moreover, it is necessary to remember that, from the day when Akbar embarked on his policy of expansion south of the Vindhyas to the day when Aurangzeb entered Golkonda, the complete subjugation of the Deccan was the consummation which Mughal policy aspired to achieve. The rulers of Bijapur had an annual revenue of 7 *crores* and 84 *lakhs* of rupees, besides $5\frac{1}{4}$ *crores* of tribute from vassal Rajas and zamindars. Golkonda, when conquered, had a revenue of 2 *crores* and 78 *lakhs* of rupees. These two Shia powers in India were in touch with the Shia monarchy of Persia, the traditional enemy of the Mughal Empire. They were also in an advanced stage of decline, torn by faction, governed by 'political Bedouins', unable to check the triumphant and exultant Marathas. An advancing aggressive power cannot put limits to its advance unless a natural frontier checks it or some other power as strong or stronger stops it. It is significant that Aurangzeb, who had failed as a Prince to conquer Balkh and Badakhshan and to reconquer Kandahar, made no attempt as Emperor to restore the

prestige of Mughal arms in these regions and to secure the heritage of Babur and the strategic fort of Kandahar; he sought the easier and perhaps more profitable line of advance in the south. He underestimated the Marathas, but greater men than he have made such mistakes and have been ruined as a consequence. Napoleon's failure was largely caused by his inability to estimate the toughness of national opposition in Spain.

In conquering Bijapur and Golkonda and in trying to conquer the Maratha State Aurangzeb pursued what was the natural trend of Mughal foreign policy, but he did this in a manner peculiar to himself. 'The Mughal crescent rounded to fullness', but the decline was visible in the last eighteen years of his life. He could not treat Shivaji with the statesman-like generosity that characterised Akbar's treatment of the Rajput chiefs or Jahangir's treatment of the Mewar Prince, and he had not the soft corner for a sovereign in distress as Shah Jahan had shown for the rulers of Bijapur and Golkonda in 1656 and 1657. He was pitiless, unsympathetic, and in his later years out of touch with reality. He could only crush, he could not conciliate. Even his reconciliation with Durgadas was very short-lived and the war-weary Rathors, who could have been easily placated, continued to be enemies of the Mughals. He could have made an honourable peace with Rajaram, recognising him as King of the Western Deccan and Konkan, and returned to Delhi. A senile obstinacy made him oblivious of the risk he was incurring by continuing his fatuous campaign against the Marathas. Aurangzeb lacked one great gift—a very fine and rare gift of high statesmanship—the sense of limits.

The Mughal Empire at its Zenith: In the last years of Aurangzeb the Mughal Empire extended from Ghazni to Chittagong and from Kashmir to the Carnatic. 'In Maharastra Kanara, Mysore and the Eastern Karnatak his rule was, however, disputed and this region has been described as *do-amli* or as obeying a double set of masters.' This vast empire was divided into 21 *Subahs*: (1) Agra, (2) Ajmer, (3) Allahabad, (4) Bihar, (5) Bengal, (6) Delhi, (7) Kashmir, (8) Lahore, (9) Gujarat, (10) Malwa, (11) Multan, (12) Thatta (Sind), (13) Orissa, (14) Khandesh, (15) Berar, (16) Aurangabad, (17) Bidar, (18) Bijapur, (19) Hyderabad, (20) Kabul, (21) Oudh. Excluding Afghanistan, which had a revenue of 20 *lakhs* in Akbar's time and 40 *lakhs* under Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire under the last Great Mughal had a revenue of 33 *crores* and 25 *lakhs*, as contrasted with

13 *crores* and 21 *lakhs* under Akbar. This was the yield of the land revenue. The proportion of assignment (*jagir*) to reserved lands (*khalisa*) in the last years of Aurangzeb may be guessed from the fact that the sum of 27.65 *crores* was assessed on *jagirs* and 5.81 *crores* on *khalisa*.

Long War with the Marathas: By 1689 Aurangzeb reached the zenith of his power. Northern India as well as the Peninsula lay at his feet. 'All seemed to have been gained by Aurangzeb now; but in reality all was lost. It was the beginning of his end. The saddest and most hopeless chapter of his life now opened. The Mughal Empire had become too large to be ruled by one man or from one centre.... His enemies rose on all sides; he could defeat but not crush them for ever.... The endless war in the Deccan exhausted his treasury; the Government turned bankrupt; the soldiers, starving from arrears of pay, mutinied.... Napoleon I used to say, "It was the Spanish ulcer which ruined me." The Deccan ulcer ruined Aurangzeb.

After Shambhuji's death the Marathas began what was really a people's war. Rajaram, his younger brother, became the acknowledged head of the Maratha State; but there was no Maratha Central Government. Rajaram took shelter in the strong fort of Gingi in the Carnatic, which became the centre of Maratha enterprise in the east coast. Every Maratha captain with his own retainers harassed the Mughals. Aurangzeb was confronted with an all-pervasive enemy 'from Bombay to Madras across the Indian peninsula, elusive as the wind, without any headman or stronghold whose capture would result in the exhaustion of its power.'

The tide turned against Aurangzeb in May 1690, when Rustam Khan, a top-ranking Mughal general, was defeated and taken captive by the Marathas. The attempt to capture Panhala from the Marathas ended in failure. Two enterprising Maratha generals, Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadav, made incessant raids. So great was the terror of the name of Santaji that 'there was no Imperial Amir bold enough to resist him, and every loss he inflicted made the Imperial forces quake.' He was murdered in a domestic feud. The Mughals captured Gingi in 1698; but Rajaram escaped and returned to Satara, where he organised a new army. The Emperor now devoted his attention to the sieges of successive Maratha forts. A fatuous campaign now began which is best described in the following words: 'A hill fort captured by him after a vast expenditure of time, men and money, the fort recovered by the Marathas from the weak

Mughal garrison after a few months and its siege begun again by the Mughals a year or two later. The siege of eight forts—Satara, Parli, Panhala, Khelna, Kondana (Singhgarh), Rajgarh, Torna and Wagingera occupied five years and a half.'

Rajaram died in 1700. He was succeeded by his minor son, Shivaji III. The Regency was taken up by Rajaram's masterful widow, Tara Bai, who continued to lead the counter-offensive against the Mughals. The Marathas began to plunder the Mughal territories not only in the Deccan but also in Malwa and Gujarat. In 1706 a large Maratha army threatened the Emperor's camp at Ahmednagar.

Worn out by the indecisive Maratha war, the Emperor fell seriously ill; he retreated, closely pursued by the Marathas. In the midst of universal disorder, desolation, misery and destitution, with a sense of utter frustration, he withdrew to Ahmadnagar in 1705. The Maratha counter-offensive gathering momentum became completely dominant. At his journey's end the great Emperor was fully conscious of the failure of his Deccan campaign. He died on February 20, 1707, at Ahmednagar.

Character and Policy of Aurangzeb: Aurangzeb wrote in his last letter to his favourite son Kam Bakhsh, 'Worldly men are deceivers (literally, they show wheat as sample and deliver barley). Do not do any work in reliance on their fidelity.' In his lonely eminence, suspicious of all men, this last Great Mughal in his last days saw in the political disorder around him that his officials were really unfit for positions of trust and responsibility, lacked initiative, made his administration ineffective, his arms unprosperous. Sadulla, famous in the days of Shah Jahan as a very wise administrator, once remarked to a pessimist, 'No age is without men of ability. What is needed is a wise master to find them out, cherish them, get his work done by them and never lend his ears to the whispers of selfish men against such officers.' In spite of Aurangzeb's minute supervision, checks and counterchecks, there was an atmosphere of mere self-interested compliance in the higher ranks of Mughal State service as contrasted with the manly tradition of personal responsibility and personal devotion of the days of Akbar and Shah Jahan.

When Muhammad Akbar rebelled, Aurangzeb sought to dissuade him from following the path of 'ill-luck'. The rebel Prince wrote in reply, 'How can the path which your Majesty himself has trod be the path of ill-luck?' Aurangzeb's breach of allegiance to his own father, and the fate to which he consigned his brothers, had its

nemesis. His eldest son Muhammad Sultan joined Shuja and had to be thrown into prison at the very beginning of the reign. Then came the rebellion of Muhammad Akbar and he had to be hounded out of India. Prince Shah Alam, the eldest of his sons living in 1677, was found negotiating with the ruler of Golkonda, perhaps to save that monarch's throne and dynasty. This was regarded as treason. He was arrested and thrown into prison from which he did not emerge until seven years later. It is said that after the arrest of the Prince 'the Emperor hurriedly broke up his court, ran to his wife Aurangabadi Mahal, kept slapping his knees and moaning, "Alas! Alas! I have razed to the ground what I had been rearing up for the last forty years." ' In his operations against the Marathas reliance could not be placed on Azam and Kam Bakhsh who were anxious to secure Maratha aid in the impending war of succession. In his death-bed Aurangzeb expressed an anxious desire to partition the empire among his sons to avoid fighting between armies and slaughter of mankind. But his own example was too indelibly impressed on the political mind of Mughal India to make such a thing possible.

Austere in morals, never swayed by favourites, his strength of will amounting almost to obstinacy, this great monarch furnishes an example of the familiar lesson that countries may be overgoverned. With less of pomp than his European contemporary Louis XIV, he had not less of the lust of conquest and of over-centralisation. Foreign travellers as also Muslim chroniclers describe with admiration his marvellous industry in administration. Besides holding daily courts and Wednesday trials he wrote orders on letters and petitions with his own hand and dictated the very language of official replies. The Italian physician Gemelli Careri thus describes the Emperor's public audience of March 21, 1695, 'I admired to see him endorse the petitions (of those who had business) with his own hand without spectacles and by his cheerful, smiling countenance he seemed to be pleased with the employment.' A very learned and competent scholar, he was largely responsible for that great digest of Muslim Law made in India bearing his name, *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, which has regulated Islamic justice in India ever afterwards. But such a ruler could not be a success as an administrator. He could not quicken human energies by his example and he belongs as an administrator to the tamer race of toilers.

Aurangzeb has been described as 'the greatest of the Great Mughals save one' in spite of his failure which was prodigious. He

failed as an administrator, he failed also as a statesman. For this we must seek an explanation in his character as also in the policy that he pursued. It has been pointed out above that in his policy of conquest he had no sense of limits. The far-reaching consequences of his religious policy can hardly be over-emphasized.

Collapse of Administration: Aurangzeb's attempt to suppress the Marathas and his long absence in the Deccan undermined the foundations of 'Mughal peace, the sole justification of the Mughal Empire'. Manucci, the Italian traveller, tells us that in 1705, as Aurangzeb withdrew from the Maratha country, 'he left behind him the fields of these provinces devoid of trees and bare of crops, their places being taken by the bones of men and beasts'. Trade almost ceased in the Deccan. Almost continuous warfare caused desolation and universal disorder. Imperial dominions in the Deccan, Malwa and Gujarat were desolated by Maratha bands. Even where war was not raging Provincial Governors disregarded Imperial prohibitions. 'Lawlessness reigned in many places in Northern and Central India. The old Emperor in the far-off Deccan lost all control over his officers in Hindustan, and the administration grew slack and corrupt.' Administrative decline was naturally accompanied by public disturbances. 'The treasury was empty, the Imperial army knew itself beaten and recoiled from its foes. The centrifugal forces were asserting themselves successfully, and the empire was ready for disruption. A strenuous reign of fifty years ends in colossal failure.'

Aurangzeb's Policy Foreshadows Mughal Downfall: Between 1672 and 1679 Aurangzeb had no respite. Shivaji in the south, Tegh Bahadur in the Punjab, Khushal Khan Khattak in the north-western provinces, Satnamis at the gates of Delhi created wide-spread disturbances. But in 1679 came the spoliation of Marwar and the re-imposition of *Jeziyah* which was vigorously collected by selected collectors. No one was exempt from the Rana of Mewar to the humblest peasant. Resistance now spread like prairie fire. Destruction of temples, double customs duty on the Hindus, were galling reminders that the comprehensive state of Akbar was a thing of the past. Malwa Rajputs uprooted the beard and moustache of the *Qazis* who collected *Jeziyah*. 'Sparrows were now becoming hawks.' But almost oblivious of these developments Aurangzeb became very soon immersed in the Deccan venture.

The total number of *jagirs* to satisfy the officers of his swollen army was now very insufficient. Because of political disorders the *jagirdars*

could collect less and less and kept fewer and fewer men in their pay. Because of this decrease in armed strength of *jagirdars* there was widespread lawlessness in North India which was deprived of public money and recruits drained to the south. There was now a state of chaos. But the empire still exercised its witchery over Indian mind. Recovery might not have been impossible but after orthodoxy and narrowness came vice and sloth.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE: A GENERAL SURVEY

LITERATURE

A glorious and victorious reign stimulates the activities of the human mind. 'The wealth of Ind dazzled even eyes accustomed to the pomp of Versailles.' A long period of peace, a strong and wise government, a rich heritage of culture, and sympathetic sovereigns created exactly those conditions that lead to a brilliant revival of letters and fine arts. This glorious epoch in the realm of Indian art and letters is marked by the enlightened patronage of three remarkable members of the reigning family—Akbar with his genius of epic grandeur, Shah Jahan with his excellent taste and his magnificence, and Dara, the mystic, emotional, eclectic philosopher. Jahangir, though a *dilettante*, was also a skilled connoisseur and a generous patron.

Indo-Persian Literature under Akbar: The Indo-Persian literature of Akbar's reign had one of its ablest authors in Abul Fazl, an intimate friend of Akbar. He must be regarded as the greatest historian of India writing in Persian. His two famous works are *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari*. The former, written in praise of his hero, gives us political and military history; the latter is an administrative and statistical return. Abul Fazl has been described as a great flatterer; his style is full of circumlocution, turgid and obscure. Blochmann, however, emphasises his love of truth as well as his correctness of information and rightly says that 'the total absence of personal grievances and of expression of ill-will towards encompassing enemies show that the expanse of his large heart stretched to the clear offing of sterling wisdom'. The charge of affectation of style is not applicable to his *Ain-i-Akbari*. The administrative and statistical survey represented a half-fluid condition, but there is no denying the fact that his high official position gave him access to any document he wanted to consult and his long career and training in various departments and his undoubted ability make this laborious record of a contemporary of the highest historical value.

Other important historians of the 'Age of Akbar' were Badauni, author of *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh*, and Nizam-ud-din, author of *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*. Badauni was a hostile critic of Akbar; Nizam-ud-din

is perfunctory. Among the poets writing in Persian, Faizi, Abul Fazl's brother, must be considered as the best. Blochmann says that 'after Amir Khusrau of Delhi Muhammadan India has seen no greater poet than Faizi.' Though perhaps illiterate, Akbar had a very liberal culture and he showed an active interest in Persian translations of famous Sanskrit works like the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Atharva Veda*. He also encouraged calligraphy and music. The famous musician Tansen was a performer at his court. The *Memoirs* of Babur was translated by Abdur Rahim *Khan Khanan* into Persian. The *Khan Khanan* wrote under the pen-name Rahim in Arabic, Persian, Turki, Sanskrit and Hindi.

Hindi Literature under Akbar: Tulsidas (*circa* 1532-1623), the greatest of the Hindi poets, flourished during the 'Age of Akbar'. He lived a quiet life at Banaras and, although perhaps unknown to Akbar, numbered Raja Man Singh and Abdur Rahim *Khan Khanan* among his admirers. He wrote more than a dozen books of which the most famous is the great *Rāma-charita-mānasa*. This immortal work, composed in eastern Hindi, was written with a sympathy with human nature and knowledge of the human heart which have won the loving admiration of the masses as well as the intelligentsia. It is no mere translation of Valmiki's Sanskrit *Rāmāyana* but is quite independent in its treatment. 'Tulsidas was a poet of the greatest merit with amazing fluency, richness and depth and a sensitive ear for the harmony and melody of words. His poetry, in spite of its essentially spiritual tone, glows with colour and beauty and occasionally grows even sensuous, though the poet always seems to be apologetic about it. Tulsi made the countryside ring with the simple name of Ram.' Sir George Grierson writes, 'Looking back along the vista of centuries we see his noble figure unapproached and solitary in its niche in the temple of Fame, shining in its own pure radiance.'

The famous Hindi bard, the blind poet Surdas of Agra, graced the court of Akbar. He wrote in western Hindi. He celebrated the life and career of Krishna in his elaborate song-sequence *Surasagara*, said to extend to 60,000 lines. 'Surdas revels in beauty and does not hold himself back. Tulsi was a simple devotee and almost puritanical.' Sir George Grierson writes that the language of Surdas is the purest form of western Hindi speech but he prefers, as do many others, 'the nobility of character inherent in all that Tulsidas wrote to the pleasing but gentler muse of his great contemporary.'

Literature under Jahangir and Shah Jahan: The impulse given by the

great Akbar continued throughout the reign of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Jahangir was himself an author of considerable merit and besides composing his celebrated *Memoirs* he encouraged the completion of a valuable dictionary, the *Farhang-i-Jahangiri*. The Indo-Persian historical literature of Shah Jahan's reign was enriched by Abdul Hamid Lahori, author of the *Badshanama*, and by Khafi Khan, author of *Muntakhab-ul-lubab*. The Hindi poet Biharilal of Jaipur, author of *Satsaiya* or collection of 700 detached verses, lived in the days of Shah Jahan. His work is regarded as 'one of the daintiest pieces of art in any Indian language'. Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar was also a notable writer on Hindi poetics. Dara, a Sufi, a disciple of the Muslim saint Mian Mir, continued the philosophical traditions of his great-grandfather. He was no apostate from Islam—he himself compiled a biography of Muslim saints—but he studied the *Talmud* and the *New Testament*, the writings of the Muslim Sufis and the Hindu works on Vedanta. The greatest of Dara's literary achievements was the translation of the Upanishads from their Sanskrit originals into graceful and masterly Persian prose under the title *Sirr-ul-asrar* (the Secret of Secrets). He associated with eminent Sufis like Mulla Shah Budakhshi, Shaikh Muhibullah Allahabadi, Shah Dil-Ruba, Mushin Fani and Sarmad. He wanted to interpret to each community the highest truths of the religion of the other in accordance with his cardinal doctrine *Sulh-i-Kull*.

A retrogression in India culture is clearly visible in the days of Aurangzeb and Indian literature steadily fell back to a lower level.

ART

Architecture under Akbar: Akbar built very largely. The most famous monuments of his reign are Humayun's tomb at Delhi, fortress palaces at Agra and Lahore and the buildings at Fathepur Sikri. The structure of Humayun's tomb at Delhi was the conception of Humayun's wife, Haji Begam, who had been her husband's companion in his forced exile in Persia. She gave to the building art of the Mughal period a Persian incentive and introduced the innovation of placing the building in the centre of a park enclosure. The palace fort of Akbar at Agra has walls about 70 feet high, 'the first conception of dressed stone on such a large scale'. Its main entrance, the Delhi gate, must be considered as the most imposing and impressive gateway in India. The fort at Agra shows that the Rajput citadels must have exercised

considerable influence on the architect. Fathepur Sikri, about 40 kilometres distant from Agra, was converted by Akbar with magical speed from a hill full of wild beasts into a city with gardens and elegant edifices. He occupied it during the period 1569-85. The tolerant policy of Akbar is evident even in his monuments and other works of art. In many buildings the indigenous artists were permitted to leave features characteristic of Jain and Hindu temples. This Hindu influence is particularly evident in Jodh Bai's palace at Fathepur Sikri. The most impressive thing at Fathepur Sikri is the Buland Darwaza which commemorates Akbar's conquest of Gujarat. 'Each art culture has usually one form of utterance in which it finds the readiest means of expression and with the Mughals it was the entrance gateway.' The Buland Darwaza is the loftiest and the most magnificent gateway in India. It is an imposing structure, 176 feet in height from the level of the ground and 134 feet above the raised plinth on which it is built. Its southern facade is 130 feet broad. It dominates the entire city of Fathepur Sikri. Akbar built the forts at Attock, Lahore and Allahabad. His building activities influenced indigenous schools of art. 'Mughal foundation breaking out into Hindu exuberance' is illustrated at Amber and at Jodhpur. Abul Fazi thus describes Akbar's style of architecture: 'His Majesty plans splendid edifices and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garment of stone and clay.'

Painting under Akbar: Painting was used extensively as an architectural decoration by Akbar. The paintings of the Mughal period are commonly book-illustration and portraiture. Akbar collected numerous artists around him at Fathepur Sikri, the most famous of them being Khwaja Abdus Samad, a Persian, and the Indian artists, Daswanath and Basawan. The eminent art of Indian painting revived and received a new direction under his patronage. 'A new school began to flourish, a school entirely of portraiture and illustration, delighting in animated and crowded scenes in dramatic motives. The atmosphere resembled that of Imperial Rome rather than that of Florence in the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent. His patronage would have resulted in less of value had it not been for the example and opportunity it gave for the revival of indigenous schools of Indian art.'

Art under Jahangir: Jahangir was a *dilettante*, with a trained eye for a picture but unable to understand 'the largeness and breadth required for architectural effect'. The tomb of Akbar at Sikandra near

Agra and Jahangir's own tomb at Shahdara are unimpressive structures, but in Akbar's tomb at Sikandra minarets rising from the four corners mark a new step in the progress of Mughal architecture. Jahangir was a lover of miniature painting and the Mughal school of painting reached its meridian under his patronage. His reign is remarkable also for the perfection of the laying out of the celebrated Mughal gardens, with squares in the form of terraces, with artificial pools and numerous fountains. He constructed the lovely Shalamar Bagh in Kashmir. A new departure in Mughal style of art is noticeable in the tomb of Itimad-ud-daula at Agra, due to the 'refined feminism' of the cultured consort of Jahangir. Besides its high aesthetic taste, it is important because it marks the transition from the simpler sandstone construction of Akbar and Jahangir to the white marble structures of Shah Jahan.

Art under Shah Jahan: Shah Jahan did not so much encourage literature or miniature painting as did his predecessors, his entire attention being devoted to architecture. His constructions are remarkable for their elegance and grace. He built magnificent and most exquisitely beautiful palaces at Agra and Delhi. In the words of the author of the *Badshahnama*, 'Lovely things reached the zenith of perfection'. In the Agra fort his marble edifices—the Diwan-i-Am, the Diwan-i-Khas, the Khas Mahal, the Shish Mahal, the Mussaman Burj, the Moti Masjid—are gems of the Mughal style at its zenith. The new construction for which he was responsible at Delhi—the magnificent royal residence which he erected there—perhaps justifies his famous claim: 'If there is a paradise on earth it is this, it is this.' The Jami Masjid at Delhi was constructed by him on a majestic scale —an example of the highest type of religious architecture. It is precise, perfect and dignified that at Agra has a 'definitely intimate appeal'.

The finest flower of Mughal art is, however, the Tajmahal, 'a combination of the finest art and the most expert construction', evincing at the same time the highest artistic merit, remarkable scientific thought and technical skill, a perfect layout and the most sensuous charm. Shah Jahan planned on the opposite side of the Jumna his own tomb which would be a replica of the Taj in black marble, the two monuments to be connected by a bridge. The war of succession interrupted his plan and his unfilial successor abandoned the project. The Taj is entirely unaffected by occidental influence. The chief architect of Shah Jahan was Ustad Ahmad. The Emperor himself was a man of profound aesthetic sensibility.

Decline of Mughal Art: With the reign of Aurangzeb Mughal artistic activity comes to an abrupt end. With all his religious zeal he did not erect a single tomb or a single mosque that can be regarded as a splendid monument. There is a decline in style. Aurangzeb's personality was to a large extent responsible for this artistic decadence, but, as Percy Brown says, 'Under Shah Jahan the country had experienced a period of unrestrained production, during which its exponents had reached the summit of achievement. The usual sequence to such a condition is a marked reaction, of which art history provides several notable instances, including among others that of the great schools of painting in Europe of the seventeenth century, whose finest efforts were followed by an interval of profound exhaustion. And so it was with the architecture of the Mughals.' In connection with Mughal art it has been pointed out that 'anonymity was the practice of the country and it is thus impossible to trace the reaction between genius and environment which is such a prominent topic in the history of European art.'

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AS DESCRIBED BY EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS

Economic Conditions: 'The population of India consisted of a small but extremely wealthy and extravagant upper class, a small and frugal middle class, a very numerous lower class, living generally on the same plane of poverty as now.'

The land was cultivated in small holdings by peasants who contributed the largest share of the revenues of the State. Mining and manufacture were also organised in small units. In view of the fact that the Mughal Government was not a strong naval power and there was no big merchant marine, Indian merchants could not seek new markets; but the European traders found that the commercial aptitudes of the Indian merchants were not inferior to those of the foreigners.

In agriculture one remarkable change was the introduction of tobacco. Its consumption developed with great rapidity. Jahangir prohibited smoking in 1617, but Manucci wrote in the early years of Aurangzeb's reign that the farmer of taxes paid 5,000 rupees a day for tobacco duty at Delhi. The demand for indigo, cotton and silk also increased during this period. The peasants were not so con-

servative as is thought generally. They were shrewd enough to follow the market.

Saltpetre production in Bihar and iron production in Golkonda were important manufactures in the Mughal period, and the most notable thing during this period was the increased production of calico to meet the demand of Western Europe. According to Bernier, there was such a quantity of cotton and silk in Bengal that it might be regarded as the common storehouse for these two kinds of merchandise for the Mughal Empire, the neighbouring kingdoms and even the countries of Europe. The new factor in commerce was the large consumption of Indian silk in Japan and of Indian indigo, calico and saltpetre in Western Europe. The chief ports of India were Lahori Bandar in Sind, Surat, Goa, Calicut, Cochin, Masulipatam, and Satgaon, Sripur, Chittagong and Sonargaon in Bengal.

Bengal's export trade rapidly developed during this period. In 1681 the total value of Indian products exported from Bengal by the English East India Company amounted to 18½ *lakhs* of rupees at a time when the rupee had more than twenty times its present purchasing power. The English, French and Dutch annual investment in Bengal effected a great change in her economy. For many years the Mughal Emperors used to get from Bengal only elephants and art objects as tribute. Shaista Khan began paying 5 *lakhs* annually. During the later years of Aurangzeb's reign and the first four decades of the eighteenth century the surplus revenue from Bengal became the mainstay of the Imperial family.

The ordinary course of production was at times interrupted by famines that were not certainly more frequent than they were in the nineteenth century. In those days, however, a local shortage of food could not be quickly met by importation, and in India the tradition existed that 'aimless wandering in search of food' was the indication of the existence of famine conditions. The economic life of a village, a town or a district would break up by migration, disease, death. One of the greatest famines occurred in 1630-32 in the Deccan and Gujarat, dislocating agriculture, industry and commerce for many years.

Almost all contemporary foreign visitors refer to the cheapness of food in Indian towns and they usually attribute it to the fertility of the country. Tavernier says that even in the smallest villages flour, sugar and sweetmeats could be procured in abundance. Manucci wrote about Bengal: 'All things are in great plenty here, fruits, pulse,

grain, muslin, cloths of gold and silk.' But Moreland, a modern writer, tries to explain this in a different way: 'The economic system...may be regarded as operating to provide the urban population with subsistence below cost. The harvest glut is still a familiar fact in India...at the period we are considering this recurring glut must have been much more acute than now because the proportion of produce to be sold was much larger while the penalties attaching to default were much more severe. At each harvest there was an urgent demand for coin and the merchants who held coin in stock would practically make their own terms. They had, however, to turn over the stock of produce in time to be in funds for the next harvest and since the urban population was proportionately small, this condition secured to them supplies of food and other produce at less cost than if the markets had been free.' Moreland is at some pains to prove the poverty of the mass of the population in the seventeenth century against the cumulative evidence of almost all European travellers. There was perhaps a wider area of well-being than we can find in the twentieth century.

Social Conditions: The European travellers who came to India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have left valuable evidence with respect to Indian social institutions and economic conditions besides giving us useful information concerning Mughal court and camp.

The Sebastian Friar Manrique in his *Itinerario* refers to his experience in Bengal in 1612. He describes the fertility of the Ganges plain, the magnificence of its cotton fabrics, reverence for the Ganges and the cow, and the self-immolation practised at Juggernath and Saugar. Pietro della Valle, the Italian traveller, came to Surat in 1623. He refers to the absolute freedom of religion extended to all in Gujarat. If this Italian traveller is to be believed, the practice of *Suttee* seems to have decreased by the Mughal discouragement of the rite. Della Valle refers to the scarcity of *Suttee* near Surat and Cambay. Akbar's regulations against *Suttee* probably produced some temporary effect. Nicolo Conti in the fifteenth century and Della Valle in the seventeenth century travelled in India with their womenfolk. It has been asserted with some truth that nothing shows the high state of Indian civilization as the immunity with which strangers in India could take their womenfolk with them. 'Had the positions been reversed and an Indian traveller attempted to travel with his family through any of the more civilized countries of Europe between the beginning of the

fifteenth and the close of the sixteenth century, it is doubtful whether the treatment he would have received would have been in any way comparable to that which the natives of India, Hindu and Muhammadan alike, meted out to their *Feringhi* visitors.'

English Travellers: Hawkins, the *Inglis Khan*, gives us very valuable information relating to the economic aspect of the *Mansabdari* system in the lax days of Jahangir. Roe gives us an excellent picture of the royal camp, 'one of the wonders of my little existence'. We learn from *Purchas—his Pilgrims* that Hawkins had to introduce two English sailors into the presence of Jahangir 'as is the custom and manner of the country for no person may stay above twenty-four hours before the King to know what he is and whence he cometh'.

Bruton and Cartwright, two English merchants, came to Bengal in 1632. They stayed at Cuttack. Bruton went to Puri. He says that the temple of Juggernath enjoyed freedom from taxation until Akbar's time. This shows that while Akbar did not allow any religious persecution, he would not grant any indulgence. Bruton writes thus about the people of Bengal: 'They are notable, ingenious men let it be in what art or science soever and will imitate any workmanship that shall be brought before them.'

French Travellers: In 1666 three Frenchmen were in India—Bernier, Tavernier and Thevenot. Bernier was a physician, Tavernier a jeweller, Thevenot the companion of a French merchant. Bernier's *History* and his letters, Tavernier's *Six Voyages* and Thevenot's *Narrative* do not cover the same ground, Tavernier's account being the most important of the three. We are told by many Western writers that human life in India was held cheap and punishments were sudden, arbitrary and severe; but referring to the administration of Surat, Thevenot tells us that death sentence could not be inflicted by even the highest officials without referring to the Mughal Emperor. We know that in 1670, when Dr. Graff and another Dutchman were sent from Hughli to assist the recovery of the Dutch governor at Patna, they were arrested at Monghyr, while sketching plans of the city and the fort. But the *Faujdar* had to refer the matter to the Provincial Governor. 'He had to consult the Emperor before daring to execute a foreigner caught in the act of flagrant espionage.' Mughal administration in its best days was not inefficient, at least in certain matters that it regarded as vital.

Bernier is regarded as a leading authority for the reign of Aurangzeb. After his remark that France before the Revolution was

'held without the violation of any right', it would not be unreasonable to conclude that he did not possess the faculty of judgment. But this adverse critic of Mughal rule, who gives us a glowing picture of good government in France before the French Revolution, thinks it necessary to draw the attention of his Government to the abundance of rice, corn and other necessaries of life in Bengal, its well-populated and well-cultivated condition, its tapestries, its embroideries and its silk and other manufactures. He explains why India always had a favourable balance of trade swallowing up gold and silver from other parts of the world.

INDIA IN 1707

Mughal Peace Ends: Aurangzeb died after a long reign of fifty years. He wanted a partitioning of the empire among his three sons 'so that there will be no fighting between armies and no slaughter of mankind'. No body was going to listen to his preaching of brotherly love, peace and moderation. His plan of partition was that Shah Alam would have twelve Subas, Azam would get six and Kambaksh two. This partition plan was still-born. The idea of a united Mughal Empire was an established tradition. Humayun had attempted to divide the heritage of Babur with disastrous results. Azam wrote to Shah Alam: 'My share is from the floor to the roof of the house, yours from the roof up to the firmament.' Aurangzeb himself had made his characteristic contribution to this idea of an undivided empire when he waded through slaughter to the throne. Manucci, the Italian traveller, wrote: 'Thus do matters go on in the Mughal kingdom. Sons, grandsons, great-grandsons are making preparations for the terrible wars which must come upon the death of old kings.' Within little more than a decade after Aurangzeb's death seven severe battles were fought for imperial succession in which princes, nobles and soldiers in large number were slain, treasures were wasted and administration was disorganized.

Aurangzeb died on 3 March 1707. Ajit Singh Rathor recovered Jodhpur a fortnight after. The exultant Marathas, flushed with their successes against the Imperialists, were plundering caravans as far as Ahmednagar where the worn-out Emperor was dying. He must have felt utter helplessness in the sea of troubles around him. Mughal peace, ensured by the great Mughals, was at an end. A golden age of plunder was beginning.

No Loyalty: Much depended on the character of the monarch, the *Wazir*, the *Mir Bakhshi*, the higher *Mansabdars* and the hard core of the governing bureaucracy. In the midst of bows and salutations, courtly adulation, skilled flattery and crowd enthusiasm they were the persons who set the tone to society and politics. There was a show of loyalty to the reigning house, not to any member of it. One member of the house of Timur was as much entitled to allegiance as another. This uncertainty vitiated the atmosphere at Delhi. Family jealousies and racial animosities were vital forces. Discord among ministers sometimes transcended racial cleavage. Alienation of Rajput chieftains was Aurangzeb's legacy to his successors. Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur and Ajit Singh Rathor might on occasions serve the ruler at Delhi but the old enthusiastic loyalty, a legacy of Akbar, was a thing of the past. Rajputana had been overcome by Akbar and Jahangir by force, tact, matrimony and princely lavishness. The successors of Aurangzeb tried all these measures, one after another. But the old spirit had departed—the spirit of inclusiveness. Rajputs also fell on evil days and ceased to be the bulwark of Mughal supremacy.

In the higher and middle ranks of Mughal *Mansabdars* the comparative ratio of *Khanazads* or sons or relations of noblemen was about half. Among provincial governors the proportion was three-fourths. Racial and family affiliation decided appointments, promotions, etc. Career was not open to talent. Much depended upon the character of the sovereign. A long series of incompetent succession began in 1707. There was no wise master to find out men of ability and get his work done by them. The curse of rebellious brothers and cousins added extreme uncertainty to great and unconcealed incompetence.

At the time of Aurangzeb's death the Wazir was Asad Khan and the Mir Bakhshi was his son Zulfiqar Khan. Aurangzeb's recorded opinion was that 'there is not nor will there be any Wazir better than Asad Khan'. But how did this jewel of a minister conduct himself after Aurangzeb's death? Asad Khan and Zulfiqar Khan were the first in empire in rank and influence. They supported Azam in his war against Shah Alam. Asad Khan remained in Gwalior and Zulfiqar Khan accompanied Azam to the battlefield of Jajau. Soon after the battle began he had a slight wound on the lip and he fled from the battlefield to Gwalior. Others followed his example. His flight decided the fate of Azam. Father and son submitted to Shah Alam (known as sovereign as Bahadur Shah) and they were very

honourably treated by him. Asad Khan was appointed *Wakil-i-Mutlaq* and Zulfiqar Khan was appointed *Mir Bakhshi*. After the death of Bahadur Shah Zulfiqar played the part of king-maker, anticipating the role of the Sayyid brothers. The drunken scamp Jahandar Shah triumphed with his support. Asad Khan became Wakil-i-Mutlaq and Zulfiqar the Wazir. In the battle of Agra in which Jahandar Shah was defeated by Farrukh Siyar and the Sayyid brothers, Zulfiqar did not exert himself until he became sure that his rival Mir Bakhshi Kokaltash Khan who was leading one of the wings of Jahandar Shah's army was defeated. He then exerted his utmost but it was too late. After the defeat Jahandar Shah and Zulfiqar escaped to Delhi. But Zulfiqar, on the advice of Asad Khan, inveighed Jahandar Shah, imprisoned him and handed him over to Farrukh Siyar. This was the summit of treachery and infamy. The conduct of these two topmen, the flower of Mughal aristocracy in the last years of Aurangzeb's reign, started the epidemic of treachery, violence, shame and misfortune. The Mughal throne was no longer supported by any principle of loyalty.

Court: According to the French traveller Thevenot, when the court was in Delhi it was the most populous city in the world, a city of about 400,000 souls. It looked almost like a desert when the Emperor was absent. We can very well guess how much the long absence of the Emperor in the Deccan affected the Imperial capital. The fort, with its walls of red granite, was not a place of great strength. But it surpassed the Kremlin in Moscow which it very much resembled. The energies of the Mughal Empire were devoted to the glorification of the court. The mansions of the princes and great lords were in a line along the river. The houses were stately and pleasant with many apartments but there was not much in the form of an upper storey except a flat roof on which they enjoyed the evening air. There were large caravanserais for foreign merchants with courts and porticos. Numerous baths, mosques, magnificent sepulchres and lovely gardens enhanced the beauty of the two cities—Delhi and Agra. One of the greatest contributions of the Mughals to Indian art was the spacious formal garden. Alimardan Khan's canal supplied Shah Jahan's Delhi with water so that each house could have its fountain. There was gardening in its artistic sense, not gardening in a horticultural sense. There was the planting of gardens in harmonious relation to the house, palace or mausoleum. On the death of the great lords their mansions along with other properties must have lapsed to the

State because the Mughal system of eschcat did not certainly exclude these residences. The life of the court had very little to do with the common people. The puritanical Aurangzeb, directly and indirectly, discouraged the glorification of the court and court life. But his long reign, while it discouraged art, did not certainly ameliorate the life of the people. As he himself wrote: 'I have not at all done any true government of the realm or cherishing of the peasantry.'

Finance: Was the Mughal government bankrupt in 1707? Salaries were in arrears for three years. Continuous war drained away current as also accumulated resources. But recovery was not perhaps impossible. In spite of twenty-five years' costly campaign there was still the accumulated treasure of 24 *crores* in the vaults at Agra. Land revenue yielded more than 33 *crores*, *Jeziyah* about 4 *crores*, inland customs revenue and port duties at Surat (12 *lakhs*), Masulipatan, Hughli and other places also yielded a considerable amount. The *jagir* system (27.64 *crores* out of a total of 33 *crores*) was no doubt fast breaking down. But the situation was not altogether irretrievable if there was peace and the return of old administrative efficiency. But chronic warfare gave no respite. Mughal administration had disintegrated in the Deccan, parts of Malwa, Bundelkhand and Gujarat. Predatory spoliation, raids, wars and unstable government made recovery impossible. But in the rest of India, not affected by chronic anarchy, the economy was not somnolent. As *jagirs* were assignments of revenue, the inference is natural that the cash nexus was well-established. There was a sound currency and money economy had superseded natural economy in most parts of the country. Traditional blending of crafts and agriculture was fast disappearing. The old system of collective maintenance of the village community artisans and payment in kind for their labour was prevalent only in remote villages in which there were traces of subsistence economy. But almost everywhere money relations were fast evolving and there was growing separation of crafts from agriculture. Caste system's reactionary influence checked its natural development. Inter-Asian and inter-Indian trade thrived. The ample blessings of large rivers navigable for many leagues helped inland trade. Cotton fabrics from the Coromandel coast formed a ready market in South-East Asian countries. Exports to Europe also contributed to the expansion of the economy. But at this stage Europe's role in developing the market should not be over-emphasised. The hiring of wage labour for the promotion of surplus value was in some areas quite

well-developed. But we do not think that we can assert that we have here even the rudiments of new capitalist relations.

'The Mughals, magnificent and ostentatious, required every article of luxury. Towns and cities grew out of this spirit.' There was a market of high consumption. The great wealth of Mughal aristocracy has been a subject of comment. There was therefore a large body of consumers who were willing and able to buy above the line of necessity. Towns and cities were nodes of commerce. There was quite a large number of them, Srinagar, Lahore, Thatta, Karachi, Cambay, Ahmedabad, Surat, Bombay, Poona (became important under the Peshwas), Goa, Calicut, Negapatam, Tranquebar, Kanchipuram, Madras, Pulicat, Masulipatam, Warangal, Golkunda, Ahmednagar, Burhanpur, Sironj, Delhi, Agra, Banaras, Patna, Lucknow, Malda, Dacca, Chittagang, Hughli, Cossimbazar, Murshidabad, Cuttack, Puri, Ganjam, Vizagapatam. In almost all countries the interest of the lowest agricultural classes was very much at the mercy of those above them and India was no exception. This evil should not be exaggerated or minimised in the case of India.

Islam forbade usury, though usury among Muslims in India was not altogether non-existent. But in organised large scale banking Muslims did not play any part. In Bengal the Jagat Seths had just begun their glorious career in high finance. Elsewhere also the Marwaris were emerging into prominence. The Chettis, the Parsis, Khojas, Borahs and other professional merchants did brisk business in different parts of India even in this age of anarchy which had already begun. Commercial morality was highly developed. Many examples could be given of skilled entrepreneurs who organised integrated productive systems of muslin or saltpetre. They knew all the ramifications of credit finance. Europeans were to their trade and finance little more than accessories. Great fortunes, a numerous trading class, and well-developed indigenous banking were pre-European in background.

Justice: The Mughal government's responsibility was confined to defence, police and justice. Special attention should, therefore, be drawn to the system of justice which prevailed in India at the close of the seventeenth century. The Muslim government is subject to the charge of indifference in the matter of justice. The principle which guided administration was that the settlement of civil disputes was a friendly act, the ancient duty of the village elders, but the punishment of serious crime was the business of the Sarkar. Muslim system

of criminal justice appears to be inconsistent with our system of natural justice. The penal law in force was Muslim law as interpreted by the *Muftis*. The right of punishment belonged to the individual and not to the government. This right should be decided by the *Qazis*. Mutilation was a form of punishment and the mode or instrument used was more important than the intention. The evidence of women and the evidence of *Zimmis* (non-Muslims) in cases of murder was invalid. Zamindars were responsible for the apprehension of thieves and restoration of property to the owners. While Muslim system of criminal justice appears to be unscientific we should recognise the suitability of the system of civil justice. The evils liable to arise from the union of revenue and judicial duties did not exist. Simple summary courts of equity and not of law existed. This was all that the state of the country demanded. Friendly arbitration was the practice. A panchayat of village elders could rarely be deceived as to the real merits of a case. Friendly arbitration sought to eliminate causes of the quarrel and, unlike the modern judicial system, did not strengthen enmities. Only in considerable property disputes were matters referred to government tribunals. In all complicated cases, even at the top level, matters were referred to arbitrators. There was very little scope for perjury, forgery or long-drawn litigation before an arbitrating panchayat of village elders.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

FALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

SUCCESSORS OF AURANGZEB

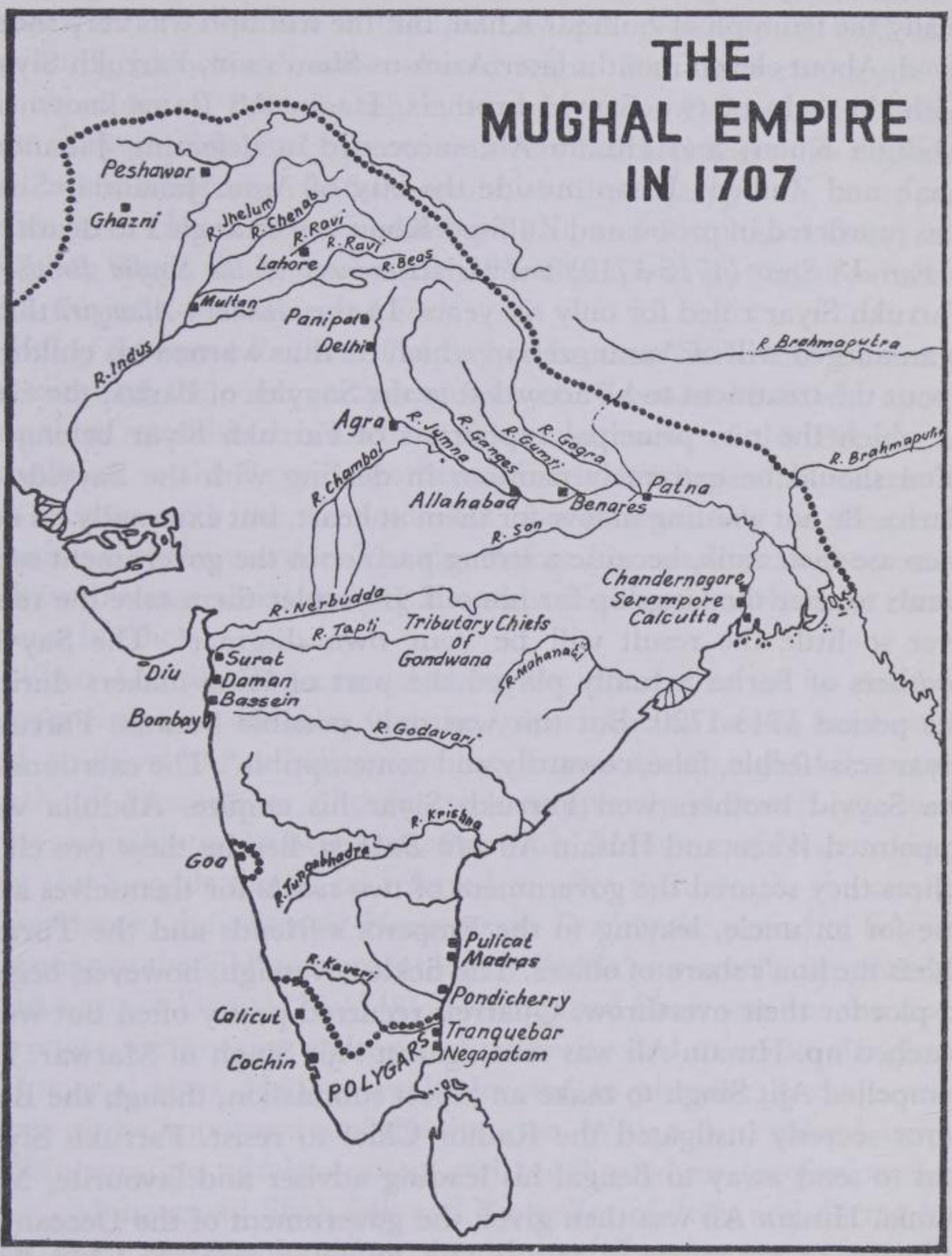
War of Succession: The death of Aurangzeb was followed by a war of succession among his sons. The eldest, Prince Muazzam (Shah Alam), was in Kabul; the second, Prince Azam, and the third, Prince Kam Bakhsh, were in the Deccan. Shah Alam, who had made secret preparations for the inevitable contest, marched quickly to Agra; his second son Azim-us-Shan, Governor of Bengal, on recall to the Deccan, had already marched with his Bengal treasure to Agra and taken possession of the city, though he had failed to take the fort. On the approach of Shah Alam the commandant of the Agra fort capitulated and Shah Alam thus got the accumulated treasures in the vaults at Agra. The decisive battle of this fratricidal contest was fought near Jajau, to the south of Agra, on 18 June 1707. Azam had with him a very big army of 45,000 foot and 65,000 horse. The loss on each side was about 10,000, but Azam's army was completely destroyed. He himself lost his life as also his two sons. But the civil war was not over yet. Shah Alam, known as sovereign as Bahadur Shah, had to march to the south to defeat Kam Bakhsh at Hyderabad on 13 January 1709. Kam Bakhsh died of his wounds.

Bahadur Shah (1707-1712): Fortunately for Bahadur Shah, events in the Deccan had taken a favourable turn. Before proceeding to the north to fight for the throne, Azam had released Shahu, son of Shambhuji, from Mughal captivity. This was done on the astute advice of Zulfiqar Khan. A civil war began in Maharashtra between the partisans of Shahu and those of Tara Bai. The Maratha menace for some time ceased to trouble Delhi.

But in the Punjab the Sikhs under the leadership of Banda were successfully carrying on a war of revenge against the Mughals. Though Bahadur Shah succeeded in taking the Sikh fort of Lohgarh, Banda escaped to the hills and the struggle continued. Ajit Singh of Marwar submitted, rebelled again and then submitted for the second time. The ruler of Marwar as also Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur were taken into Mughal service.

Bahadur Shah died in February 1712. He was an extremely weak man, far too old and easy-going to act with sustained energy. He was

so undecided that he could not select his *Wazir* as between Munim Khan, his old Minister, and Asad Khan, who joined him after Jajau with the prestige of service under Aurangzeb. He divided authority between the two which made for competition in administration.



Jahandar Shah (1712-1713): The inevitable civil war between the four sons of Bahadur Shah began immediately after his death. Azim-us-Shan, his second son, was the ablest of the brothers. But Jahandar Shah, the eldest, was supported by Zulfiqar Khan, who secretly

brought all the three princes together for joint action against Azim-us-Shan, who was then defeated and slain. The three brothers, Jahandar Shah, Rafi-us-Shan and Jahan Shah, then fell out among themselves. The two youngest brothers were slain and Jahandar Shah, a worthless profligate, now became the undisputed master. It was really the triumph of Zulfiqar Khan, but the triumph was very short-lived. About eleven months later Azim-us-Shan's son, Farrukh Siyar, with the help of two Sayyid brothers, Hasan Ali (later known as Abdulla Khan) and Husain Ali, succeeded in defeating Jahandar Shah and Zulfiqar Khan outside the city of Agra. Jahandar Shah was murdered in prison and Zulfiqar Khan was strangled to death.

Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719) *and the Ascendancy of the Sayyid Brothers*: Farrukh Siyar ruled for only six years. In the *Akham-i-Alamgiri* there is an alleged will of Aurangzeb in which he thus warned his children about the treatment to be accorded to the Sayyids of Barha, the clan to which the two principal supporters of Farrukh Siyar belonged. 'You should be extremely cautious in dealing with the Sayyids of Barha. Be not wanting in love for them at heart, but externally do not increase their rank, because a strong partner in the government soon wants to seize the kingship for himself. If you let them take the reins ever so little the result will be your own disgrace'. The Sayyid brothers of Barha actually played the part of King-makers during the period 1713-1720. But this was only possible because Farrukh Siyar was 'feeble, false, cowardly and contemptible'. The exertions of the Sayyid brothers won Farrukh Siyar his empire. Abdulla was appointed *Wazir* and Husain Ali *Mir Bakhshi*. Besides these two chief offices they secured the government of two *subahs* for themselves and one for an uncle, leaving to the Emperor's friends and the Turani chiefs the lion's share of offices. The fickle sovereign, however, began to plot for their overthrow. Quarrels recurred pretty often but were patched up. Husain Ali was sent against Ajit Singh of Marwar. He compelled Ajit Singh to make an abject submission, though the Emperor secretly instigated the Rathor Chief to resist. Farrukh Siyar had to send away to Bengal his leading adviser and favourite, Mir Jumla. Husain Ali was then given the government of the Deccan in supersession of Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Emperor continued his plots against the Sayyid brothers. Husain Ali at last decided to start with his army for the north; he granted the Marathas the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the six *subahs* of the Deccan and a Maratha army accompanied him in his northern expedition. Farrukh Siyar's abject

surrender was of no avail. The Sayyids took possession of the Imperial palace, deposed Farrukh Siyar and put him to death two months after deposition.

'There is a local tradition among the Sayyids of Barha that someone proposed to set aside the Imperial house altogether, the throne to be transferred to one of the two brothers. Probably the difficulty was to decide which brother should reign.' Rafi-ud-darjat, a son of the third son of Bahadur Shah, was set up as Emperor. Suffering from consumption, he began to sink very fast and had to be deposed soon after, his brother Rafi-ud-daula, another sickly youth, being put in his place. He died in September 1719, and Raushan-Akhtar, son of Jahan Shah, fourth son of Bahadur Shah, was put on the throne with the title of *Muhammad Shah.*

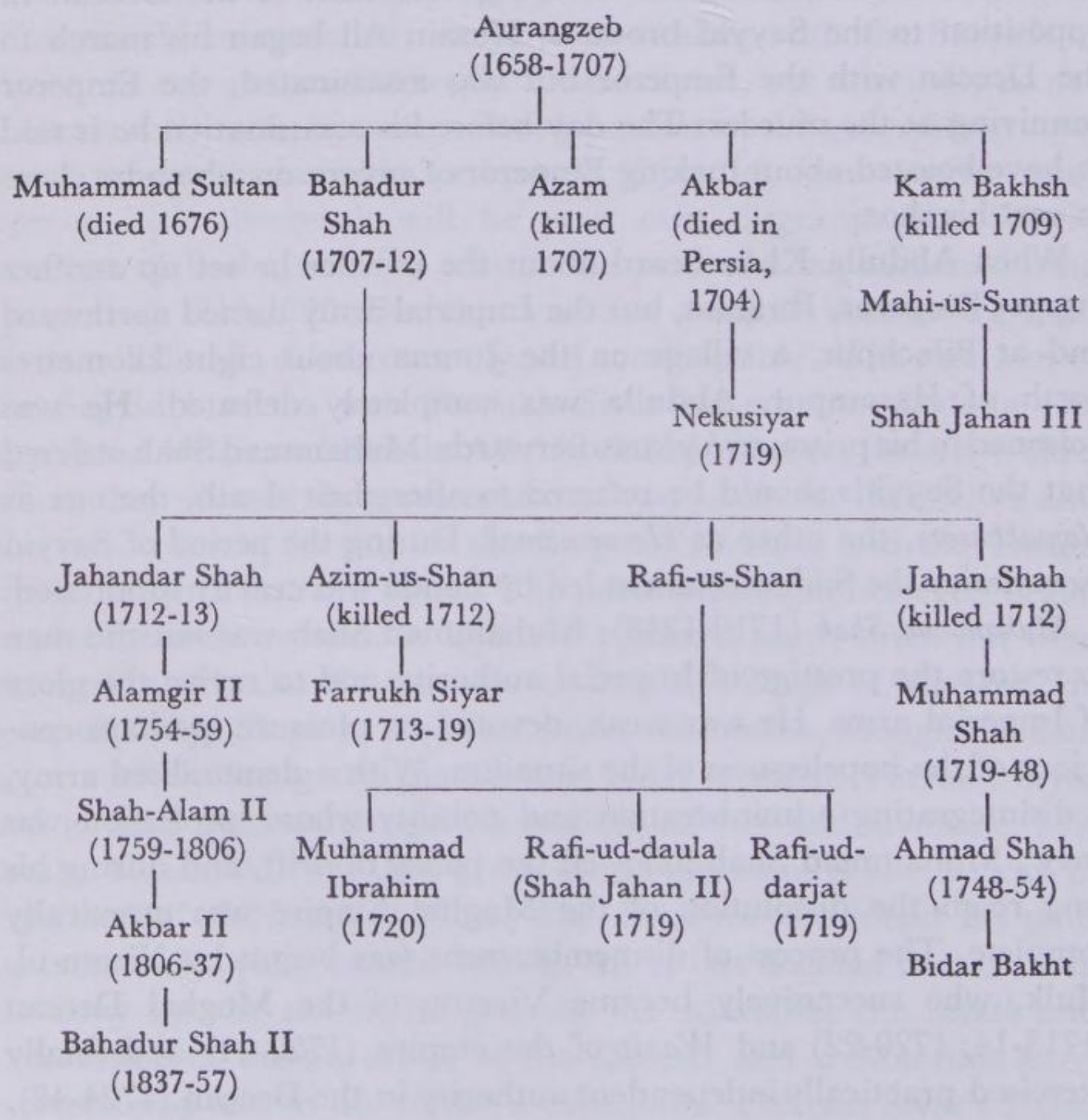
Fall of the Sayyid Brothers: The Sayyid brothers had made too many enemies and the court party leagued with Nizam-ul-Mulk who about this time established himself in the government of the Deccan in opposition to the Sayyid brothers. Husain Ali began his march to the Deccan with the Emperor but was assassinated, the Emperor conniving at the murder. The day before his assassination he is said to have boasted about making Emperor of anyone on whom he chose to cast his shoe.

When Abdulla Khan heard about the murder he set up another puppet Emperor, Ibrahim, but the Imperial army turned northward and at Bilochpur, a village on the Jumna about eight kilometres north of Hassanpur, Abdulla was completely defeated. He was poisoned in his prison two years afterwards. Muhammad Shah ordered that the Sayyids should be referred to after their death, the one as *Namakharam*, the other as *Haramnamak*. During the period of Sayyid ascendancy the Sikh movement led by Banda was cruelly suppressed.

Muhammad Shah (1719-1748): Muhammad Shah was not the man to restore the prestige of Imperial authority and to revive the glory of Imperial arms. He was weak, devoted to pleasure, perhaps conscious of the hopelessness of the situation. With a demoralised army, a disintegrating administration and nobility whose 'profession was envy', Muhammad Shah followed the policy of drift, and during his long reign the dissolution of the Mughal Empire was practically complete. The process of dismemberment was begun by Nizam-ul-Mulk, who successively became Viceroy of the Mughal Deccan (1713-14, 1720-22) and *Wazir* of the empire (1722-24) and finally exercised practically independent authority in the Deccan (1724-48).

He is the founder of the State of Hyderabad. Nadir Shah, before his departure from Delhi with his spoils, warned Muhammad Shah particularly against Nizam-ul-Mulk whom he had found to be the most cunning, self-seeking, crafty and unscrupulous among the courtiers at Delhi. But if the Nizam as the ablest of the self-seeking courtiers achieved the greatest success in his career of independence, others less able also achieved success as founders of independent Viceroyalties—Saadat Khan in Oudh, Alivardi Khan in Bengal, and the Rohilla Afghans in the region now known as Rohilkhand. The Marathas succeeded in seizing Malwa, Bundelkhand, Gujarat, Berar, and shortly afterwards, Orissa. Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739 left the Mughal Empire in a bewildered state. Ahmad Shah Abdali completed the work begun by him.

Genealogical Table of the Later Mughals



The Puppet Emperors: Muhammad Shah was succeeded by Ahmad Shah (1748-54), Alamgir II (1754-59) and Shah Alam II (1759-1806). The Delhi Empire gradually shrank to the northern half of the Gangetic Doab with some territory on the west of the Jumna. The Jats in the south and the Sikhs in the west encroached upon what remained in the hands of the puppet monarchs—unworthy descendants of Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. Even in this region the government was not in the hands of the nominal Mughal Emperor and between 1784 and 1803 it was included within the Maratha sphere of influence. When, in 1803, Lord Lake, the British Commander-in-chief, entered Delhi and the Maratha power in the Imperial capital collapsed, there was an end of the phantom of Imperial authority. The name of the dynasty was struck out from the pages of time in 1857, when the rebel sepoys sought to find a legitimate leader in Bahadur Shah II, the last of the Mughals.

PERSIAN AND AFGHAN INVASIONS

The Safavi Empire of Persia and the Mughal Empire of India bordered on each other. The Safavis and the Timurids regarded each other as rivals, but in no instance did the Safavi dynasty embark on a policy of conquest. Bernier says: 'If the Persians were in a condition of undertaking anything against Hindustan, why was it that in the last troubles and civil wars which continued so long in Hindustan the Persians sat still and looked on when Dara, Shah Jahan, Shuja and perhaps the Government of Kabul desired their assistance and they might, with no very great army, nor great expenses have seized on the fairest part of India beginning from the kingdom of Kabul unto the river Indus and beyond it and so made themselves umpires of all things?' They might have also taken advantage of Aurangzeb's long absence in the south. Persia was not a menace to Mughal India, though it was an asylum for Indian rebels and as a neighbour was regarded naturally as a rival.

Invasion of Nadir Shah (1738-39): The decline of the Safavi Empire began earlier than that of the Mughal Empire. Early in the eighteenth century dissolution came, the Safavi Empire broke to pieces, and Afghan rule in Persia began in 1722. Nizam-ul-Mulk advised Muhammad Shah to march to the assistance of the Safavids. The advice was, of course, rejected. But if the Mughal Emperor refused to march to the assistance of the ruler of Persia, another deliverer appeared in the

person of Nadir Quli, son of Imam Quli, a poor Turkoman. After expelling the Afghans he deposed the Safavid ruler Tahmasp and became Regent in 1732 and King in 1736. Early in 1737 he laid siege to the Afghan fort of Kandahar and many Afghans fled to the Mughal province of Kabul in the north. Nadir Shah sent an ambassador to the Delhi Court to protest against this. The Delhi Court detained the ambassador and sent no reply for about a year. The triumphant Turkoman was not to be so easily got rid of. He decided to invade India. The defences of Afghanistan and the Punjab had been neglected by the declining Mughals. Nadir Shah had no difficulty in conquering Afghanistan. He then defeated the Indian forces guarding the Khyber Pass. Although primarily a cavalry leader, he could also use his infantry to great effect. He entered Peshawar in November 1738, and resumed his advance in December. Zakariya Khan, Governor of the Punjab, submitted after some resistance. Nadir Shah then marched from Lahore to Karnal (32 kilometres north of Panipat), where he met the Imperial army in February 1739.

'The proceedings of the Imperial court during Nadir's invasion form a tale of disgraceful inefficiency amounting to imbecility.' As Ghulam Husain says: 'The roads and passes being neglected, every one passed and repassed, unobserved; no intelligence was forwarded to court of what was happening; and neither Emperor nor Minister ever asked why no intelligence of that kind ever reached their ears.' No serious attempt was made to resist the invader till his arrival within striking distance of the Imperial capital.

After the fall of the Punjab the Emperor's advisers, among whom must be included Nizam-ul-Mulk, decided to entrench at Karnal. The Persian army numbered 55,000, the total Indian force about 75,000. But the number of Indian non-combatants was excessive. Nadir did not make any frontal attack but secured Panipat, thus seizing the Mughal line of communications with Delhi. The Mughal army was thus compelled to come out. The battle of Karnal was, however, precipitated by Saadat Khan's insistence on going out to the rescue of his camp followers. The battle lasted three hours, 8,000 Indians being slain. Negotiations for peace began and after some discussion it was agreed that the Persian army would go away on payment of a war indemnity of fifty *lakhs*. This arrangement was upset by personal jealousy. Khan Dauran, the *Mir Bakshi* of the emperor, died of his wounds in the Mughal camp. The Nizam induced Muhammad Shah to confer the office on his eldest son. Saadat Khan, a

captive in Nadir's camp, was beside himself with jealousy and anger when he heard it. He assured Nadir Shah that if he went to Delhi he would get twenty *crores* in cash and jewels. The Nizam and the emperor in their next visit to Nadir Shah were made captives and the invader marched to Delhi with Muhammad Shah in his train.

A rumour spread in Delhi during Nadir Shah's stay there that he had been assassinated and in a riot some of his troops were slain. In revenge he perpetrated a general massacre in which 20,000 were put to the sword. He spent two months in Delhi, issued coins in his own name and the public prayer was read in his name as sovereign. He took with him booty which has been estimated as high as seventy *crores*, including all the crown jewels, the celebrated diamond *Koh-i-nur* and the Peacock Throne of Shah Jahan. At the time of his departure he placed the crown of Hindustan on the head of Muhammad Shah, who ceded to the conqueror the trans-Indus territory of the Mughal Empire. Thus was Afghanistan lost to the Mughals. The Mughal Governor of Lahore was also to send him twenty *lakhs* a year as the surplus revenue of four districts east of the Indus which he had conquered from local chiefs. This invasion left the Mughal Empire 'bleeding and prostrate'; its weakness was revealed and its prestige was destroyed.

Invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali: Nadir Shah was assassinated in 1747. Afghanistan was made an independent State by Ahmad Shah Abdali. He had come to India in the train of Nadir Shah and he had seen with his own eyes how weak the Mughal Empire was. He naturally followed in the footsteps of Nadir Shah. 'With the Khyber Pass and the Peshawar district in foreign hands, the Punjab became a starting point for fresh expeditions against Delhi.' He invaded India for the first time in 1748 and seized Lahore; but at Manupur near Sirhind he was defeated by a Mughal army nominally led by Prince Ahmad Shah. He invaded India for the second time in 1750. At Delhi the Iranis and the Turanis were quarrelling, and with no help forthcoming from the court, the Mughal Governor of Lahore, Mir Mannu, bought him off by agreeing to pay him the surplus revenue of the four districts east of the Indus that Muhammad Shah had agreed to pay to Nadir Shah in 1739.

The third Abdali invasion was undertaken in 1752. Mir Mannu was defeated near Lahore and submitted. Abdali conquered Kashmir and the Mughal Emperor, Ahmad Shah, ceded to him the entire country as far east as Sirhind. Abdali left Mir Mannu as his Governor

in Lahore. The Mughal *Wazir*, Safdar Jang, a rival of Mir Mannu, did not come to his help; he was making preparations for war in Oudh and Allahabad while the Mughal Emperor made this territorial cession to Abdali.

The fourth Abdali invasion took place in 1756-57. Mir Mannu was dead and the disorganised condition of the Punjab caused by his sudden death brought the invader again to India. He entered Lahore and marched straight upon Delhi. The Rohilla Chief, Najib-ud-daula, went over to him. The *Wazir*, Imad-ul-Mulk, surrendered without fight. Abdali looted on an enormous scale. All men, rich and poor, aristocrats and commoners, big merchants and small cultivators, were indiscriminately plundered. Abdali sacked Mathura and plundered Brindaban, but an outbreak of cholera in his camp compelled him to retreat. The booty which he took with him has been valued as high as twelve *crores*. The helpless Mughal Emperor, Alamgir II, was forced to cede formally the Punjab, Kashmir and Sind. Abdali left his eldest son, Timur Shah, at Lahore as his Viceroy for the government of these ceded tracts. But the Marathas under Raghunath Rao came to the Punjab and expelled Timur Shah within a year. This made a war to the finish between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali inevitable. Abdali came, as was not unexpected, in 1759, and undertook a campaign that culminated in the decisive third battle of Panipat. Ahmad Shah did not profit much by this victory. His troops clamoured for their pay which was in arrears and insisted on being led back. He withdrew in March 1761.

Abdali's idea now was to rule over the Punjab, Sirhind, Kashmir and Sind, with Delhi, Agra, Mathura and other places reserved for plunder. But the rise of the Sikh power very soon made untenable his dominion over the Punjab proper. He came to India in 1762, 1764, 1765 and 1767. With all his military genius and the tradition of victory that attached to his name he failed to crush the Sikhs; the cunning Sikh strategy, his preoccupations elsewhere, the disadvantage of fighting with a nation in arms and the terrible vitality of the Sikh *Khalsa* (or commonwealth) foiled him and the sovereignty of the Sikhs became established in the greater portion of the Punjab. Keene puts it very aptly: 'A few incursions, each less successful than its predecessors; the famous Khalsa was to settle down, like a wall of concrete, a dam against the encroachments of the northern flood.'

The motives of Ahmad Shah in undertaking his Indian expeditions have been thus analysed by Elphinstone: In the first place, he expected

thereby to consolidate his power at home. Though his was a national monarchy, he was himself, after all, an upstart. He hoped by means of his foreign wars to increase his reputation and thereby to win the loyalty of the Afghans. Not only would the Indian campaigns provide him with the expenses of maintaining his army but they would also enable him to heap favours and rewards on the Afghan chiefs. The actual results of Abdali's Indian invasions in Afghanistan are not ascertainable, but, in the Punjab at least, he was indirectly responsible for the ultimate success of the Sikhs and his career in India is very intimately a part of the Sikh struggle for independence.

THE MARATHA EMPIRE

Last Years of Aurangzeb: The Maratha war of independence against Aurangzeb affected the Maratha State no less than the Mughal Empire. During this confused period, Rajaram had to revive the system of *jagirs* and *saranjams* for the hazardous service which he expected the Maratha chiefs to perform. The Marathas reduced spoliation to a system and the State servants had to support themselves by plundering on all sides. This created a very dangerous tradition. 'When the Mughals denuded Maharashtra of all their effectives, the Marathas, who had been long without a State to govern, a Government to control their activities, now found themselves even without an enemy to fight with. The floating mass of lawless elements, now off their anchor, drifted to all sides without a point or purpose. Crowning these confusions broke out a civil war.' The following problems remained as the legacy of the Maratha war of independence —to establish a well-regulated internal administration, to reclaim the people to civil life, to destroy the germs of civil war, and to lay the foundations of a stable State.

Shahu (1708-49): After Aurangzeb's death his son Azam released Shahu (son of Shambhuji) in expectation that his return to Maharashtra would cause a division among the Marathas who were then united under the leadership of Tara Bai. This calculation proved to be quite correct. Tara Bai refused to give up her son's claims. She asserted that Shahu was an impostor, and compelled her courtiers to swear fidelity to her son against other claimants. Thus a civil war began in Maharashtra. Shahu entered Satara and was crowned in January 1708. Tarā Bai fell back upon Panhala, twenty kilometres from Kolhapur which was made the capital of the rival kingdom.

Her son died in 1712. Tara Bai was removed from the administration of Kolhapur and her place was taken by her co-wife Rajas Bai, who administered the Kolhapur Kingdom on behalf of her son Shambhuji. But Shahu's hold on the Maratha State at Satara was very precarious in view of the prevalence of open anarchy. A very remarkable man now appeared who became the saviour of the Maratha State.

Genealogical Table of the Bhonsla Chhatrapatis

Jija Bai = Shahji = Tuka Bai

Vyankoli *or* Ekoji
(Tanjore)

Sai Bai = Shivaji I (1627 *or* 1630-1680) = Soyra Bai

Shambhuji I
(1680-89)

Shahu I *or* Shivaji II
(1708-49)

Tara Bai = Rajaram

Shivaji III
(1700-1712)

Ram Raja
(1749-1777)

Shahu II
(*adopted*)
(1777-1810)

Pratap Singh
(1810-39)

(1680-1700) = Rajas Bai

Shambhuji II
(1712-1760)
(*Kolhapur Branch*)

Shahji
(1839-48)

Peshwa Balaji Viswanath (1713-20): Balaji Viswanath was a Chitpavan Brahmin of the Konkan. His early life is obscure. He rose to prominence in the service of Dhanaji Jadav and it is said that he was one of those who induced Dhanaji to desert Tara Bai and join Shahu. Dhanaji died in 1710. His son Chandrasen Jadav, however, deserted to Kolhapur and afterwards joined Nizam-ul-Mulk. In 1712 Balaji was appointed as a *Senakarta* or agent in charge of the army. He brought order and efficiency in the administration of Shahu's Kingdom. He was appointed Peshwa on November 16, 1713. The robber barons were one after another crushed, but Balaji had to conciliate Kanhoji Angria, who had allied himself with Kolhapur and was advancing up the Bhorghat. In February 1714, a treaty was signed

at Lonavala which guaranteed to Angria 10 forts and 16 fortified places of less strength and also recognised him as the *Sarkhel* (admiral) of the Maratha fleet. He transferred his allegiance to Satara and the Satara Government agreed to help him against his enemies—the Sidis, the Portuguese and the English.

After the confusion, weakness and total anarchy of the period 1689-1712, it was necessary to initiate a new policy. In the spirit of the treaty of Lonavala, Balaji created what came to be known as the celebrated Maratha confederacy. As the price of Maratha support he secured from Sayyid Husain Ali the grant of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the six *subahs* of the Mughal Deccan (1718). Balaji accompanied Husain Ali to Delhi and saw with his own eyes the anarchy and confusion there. The grant of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* was confirmed by Muhammad Shah later, and on the basis of this grant the Maratha confederacy was brought into existence as an organisation for collecting *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. The *Peshwa*, the *Pratinidhi*, the *Senapati*, the *Sena Saheb Subah* and other Maratha chiefs had spheres of influence from which they collected these dues. The *sardeshmukhi* was to be paid entirely to the king; twenty-five per cent of the *chauth* was also to be given to him. Six per cent (*Sahotra*) and three per cent (*Nadgunda*) of what remained of the *chauth* could be assigned by the king to whomsoever he pleased. The remainder (66 per cent) of the *chauth* (*Mokasa*) fell to the share of the chiefs. This complicated system of collection held the confederacy together, and served as an instrument of Maratha imperialism. None had a compact property that might render him altogether independent. The Marathas demanded *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* on the basis of the standard assessment of the days of Todar Mal or Malik Ambar, which these regions harassed by war could not pay. Arrears were thus always due and a standing cause of war was thus always there. The Maratha State refused to take a lump sum or a solid territorial possession and deliberately preferred assignments on proprietors. The crowd of Maratha agents served as watchdogs of Maratha interest in different parts of the Deccan.

Peshwa Baji Rao I (1720-40): Balaji Viswanath died in 1720 and was succeeded in the Peshwaship by his son Baji Rao. He pursued the policy of northward expansion in opposition to the policy of *Pratinidhi* Sripat Rao, who preferred the plan of consolidating Maratha hold on the Deccan. Shahu was carried away by the Peshwa's eloquence and his argument which was summed up in the following

words: 'Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree and the branches will fall off themselves.' The Maratha flag was to fly from the Krishna to the Indus.

Repeated expeditions were led into Malwa and Gujarat. Malhar Rao Holkar, Udaji Puar, Ranoji Sindhia and other lieutenants of Baji Rao gained experience in these expeditions. As Grant Duff puts it, 'Baji Rao comprehended the nature of predatory power and perceived its growth in turbulence and anarchy for which the system of distributing the revenue was the first remedy; he foresaw that confusion abroad would tend to order at home and that as commander of distant expeditions he should acquire the direction of a larger force than any other chief of the empire. The revenues of the Deccan would improve by withdrawing the hordes of horse which unprofitably consumed them.' The victories which the Peshwa gained enabled him to acquire complete ascendancy over the *Chhatrapati*.

In 1726 the Peshwa went to the south and a contribution was levied from Seringapatam, but he was always in favour of northward expansion. Nizam-ul-Mulk blocked his way; with characteristic artifice he allied with Shambhuji II of Kolhapur and displaced the Maratha collectors of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. This meant war. In 1728 Baji Rao by means of skirmishing succeeded in drawing him into a situation at Palkhed (32 kilometres west of Daulatabad) in which the Marathas completely surrounded Nizam-ul-Mulk's army in a waterless waste. Nizam-ul-Mulk had to give up the cause of Shambhuji and afford security for the future collection of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* by Maratha agents.

But Nizam-ul-Mulk's diplomacy was at work, fomenting the jealousy of the Maratha *Senapati*, Trimbak Rao Dabhade. There was open war between the Peshwa and the *Senapati*, but the Peshwa's brother Chimnaji Appa succeeded in defeating and killing the latter at Dabhoi in 1731. Chimnaji Appa also defeated and killed Girdhar Bahadur, the Mughal Governor of Malwa, at Amjhera (near Dhar) the same year. Muhammad Khan Bangash, who succeeded Girdhar Bahadur, could not stem the tide of Maratha advance, and his successor, Raja Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur, came to an agreement with the Peshwa. Emperor Muhammad Shah recognised Baji Rao as the Deputy Governor of Malwa. The *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of Gujarat were also ceded to the Marathas, the Dabhade family assisted by the Gaikwads dominating in that region. After the battle of Dabhoi the Gaikwads eclipsed the Dabhades in importance.

Baji Rao also led several expeditions into the Ganges-Jumna Doab and the Delhi region. All Mughal attempts to stop him failed completely. He even plundered the suburbs of Delhi. Muhammad Shah at last appealed to Nizam-ul-Mulk to come to Delhi to help him to defeat the Marathas. In 1738 the Mughal army led by Nizam-ul-Mulk and the Marathas under Baji Rao met near Bhopal. Nizam-ul-Mulk was hemmed in on all sides, the Marathas cutting off his supplies. They also prevented reinforcements reaching him and he was compelled to sign a convention granting Baji Rao the whole of Malwa as also complete sovereignty over the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal. Raja Chhatra Sal of Bundelkhand, who died in 1733, had by a will already left to Baji Rao one-third of Bundelkhand; his sons in possession of the rest of Bundelkhand became allies of Baji Rao.

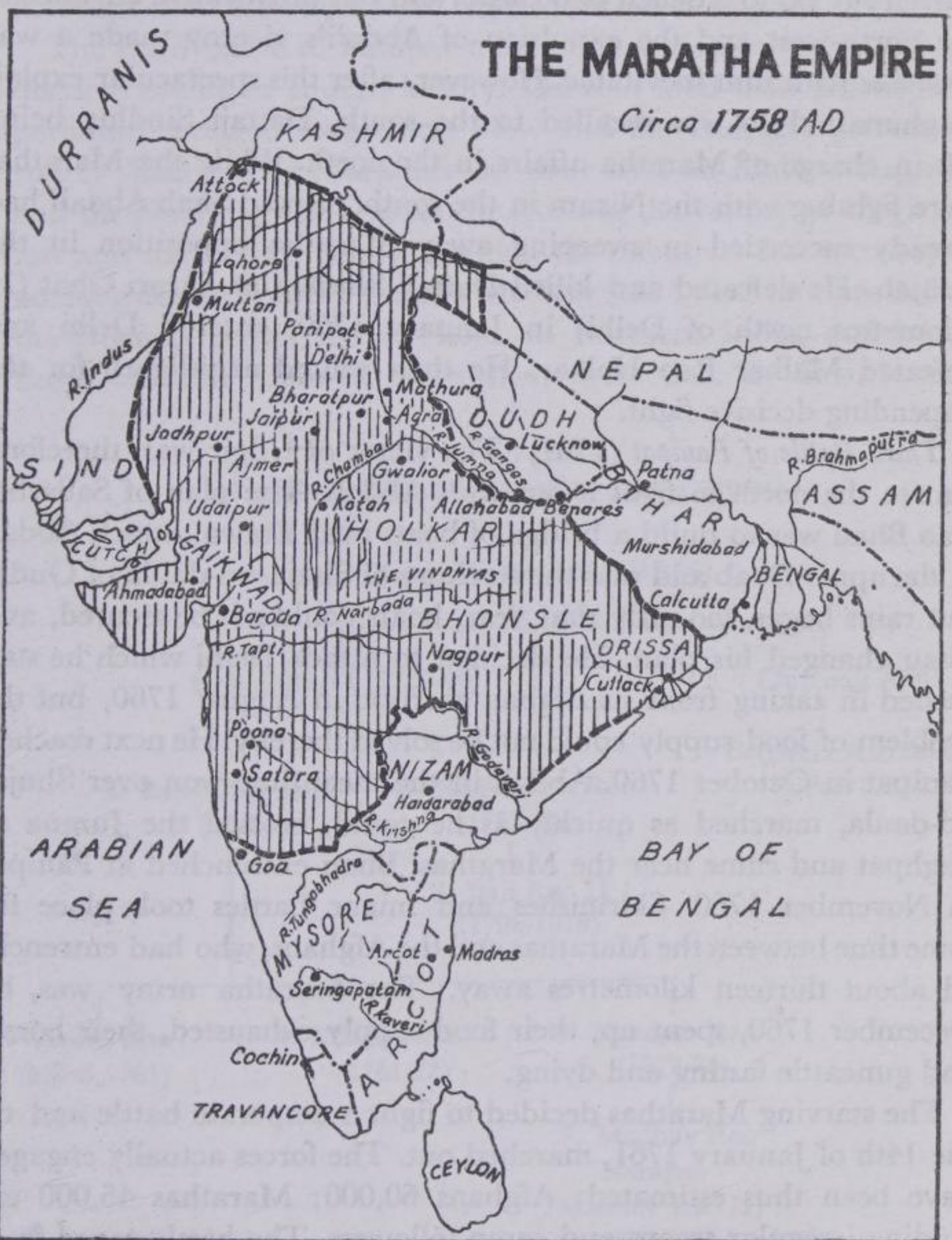
The Peshwa was now in a position to strike with greater vigour at 'the trunk of the withering tree', but Nadir Shah now invaded India and the Delhi Government collapsed under his blow. Baji Rao appears to have thought that Nadir Shah would establish himself as Emperor of Delhi; he proposed to enter into an alliance with Nasir Jang, son of Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was then in charge of Hyderabad during his father's absence at Delhi. Baji Rao said, 'Hindus and Mussalmans, the whole power of the Deccan, must assemble and I shall spread my Marathas from the Narmada to the Chambal.' He asked his brother Chimnaji, then besieging Bassein (under the Portuguese), to desist. Chimnaji, however, pushed the siege with great vigour and brought it to a triumphant conclusion in May 1739. He thus removed the Portuguese menace from the Konkan. It was the most vigorous siege prosecuted by the Marathas. The Maratha chiefs hurried with all speed after the fall of Bassein to meet the Persian invader, but news now arrived that Nadir Shah had retreated, after restoring the degraded Muhammad Shah. Baji Rao himself died in April 1740.

Baji Rao was not only a great soldier but also a great general. He has been rightly described as 'a heaven-born cavalry leader'. In his movements we find a unique combination of speed with surprise. He had all the qualities required in a great leader—character, persistence, energy, courage, political sagacity. He established Maratha supremacy in the Deccan and laid the foundations of their political hegemony in Northern India. But he made no attempt to check the dangerous feudal tendency which was destined to ruin the Maratha cause under his successors.

Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao (1740-61): Baji Rao's eldest son, Balaji Baji Rao, succeeded him in Peshwaship. *Chhatrapati* Shahu was always a factor to reckon with, but he died in December 1749. Tara Bai declared that there was a posthumous son of Shivaji II, Ram Raja by name, brought up in concealment by a wandering bard after he had been smuggled out of Panhala at birth. In accordance with Shahu's will this young man was brought to Satara and solemnly crowned. Tara Bai had hoped to control the State in his name. But finding this to be impossible she declared him to be an impostor. Ram Raja was brought from Satara to Poona, where he drew up an agreement known as the *Sangola Agreement* by which all the chief offices in the State were given to the agents of the Peshwa (1750). Henceforth the capital of the Maratha Empire was Poona and not Satara. The *Chhatrapati* no longer counted in the Maratha State; he was a *rois faineant*.

Balaji followed in the footsteps of his illustrious father in his policy of northward expansion, but the south too received his attention. Expeditions were sent to the Carnatic and tribute was realised from districts south of the Krishna. Quite early in his career as Peshwa Balaji bought off the opposition of Raghuji Bhonsle, the Maratha chief of Berar, an inveterate opponent of the Peshwa family, by giving him a free hand in Bengal; the Berar chief's annual incursions into Bengal compelled Alivardi to surrender to him the province of Orissa and to agree to pay him annually twelve *lakhs* of rupees as the *chauth* of Bengal. Balaji had his tussles with the Nizam, Salabat Jang, who was guided by that brilliant Frenchman, Bussy. Bussy's trained infantry outmanoeuvred the Marathas on more than one occasion in 1751. The Peshwa could not make an effort to eliminate the State of Hyderabad so long as that resourceful Frenchman was there. But he was recalled by Lally, the French Governor of Pondichery, in 1758. Then Balaji made a supreme effort to crush the Nizam's State. The fort of Ahmadnagar was surrendered to the Peshwa. Ibrahim Khan Gardi, a soldier of fortune who commanded the Nizam's artillery and who was trained in the school of Bussy, was persuaded to join the Peshwa's service. Sadashiv Rao Bhau, the Peshwa's cousin, won a spectacular victory over the Nizam at Udgir in 1760 and compelled him to agree to surrender a large territory. It was the apogee of Maratha greatness in the Deccan. The State of Hyderabad would have been crippled for ever, but momentous events happened in the north that were destined soon to nullify the effects of this victory.

North Indian Expeditions: The Peshwa's brother, Raghunath Rao, led two expeditions to the north. The first expedition was in 1754-56. He realised tribute from Jaipur, Kota, Bundi and other States in Rajputana; he also helped Imad-ul-Mulk, the Mughal *Wazir*, to depose the Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah and to put Alamgir II on the throne. Imad-ul-Mulk became entirely dependent on the Marathas. Lands in the Gangetic Doab were alienated to the Marathas. Raghunath Rao's second North Indian expedition was



led in 1757-58. Ahmad Shah Abdali had invaded India for the fourth time in 1756-57, entered Delhi and compelled the Mughal Emperor to cede to him the Punjab and Multan. After Abdali's departure came Raghunath Rao. Imad-ul-Mulk again joined the Marathas. Not content with entering Delhi, Raghunath Rao also advanced to the Chenab and they withdrew. There is evidence to point out that the Maratha forces at one stage advanced up to the Khyber Pass. Adina Beg Khan was left as the Maratha Viceroy of the Punjab. This expedition was a 'hollow show and financially barren'. It led to a deficit of 88 *lakhs*, and this provocative advance to the north-west and the expulsion of Abdali's viceroy made a war *l'outrance* with him inevitable. However, after this spectacular exploit Raghunath Rao was recalled to the south, Dattaji Sindhia being left in charge of Maratha affairs in the north. While the Marathas were fighting with the Nizam in the south, Ahmad Shah Abdali had already succeeded in sweeping away Maratha opposition in the Punjab. He defeated and killed Dattaji Sindhia at Barari Ghat (16 kilometres north of Delhi) in January 1760, entered Delhi and defeated Malhar Rao Holkar. He then waited at Aligarh for the impending decisive fight.

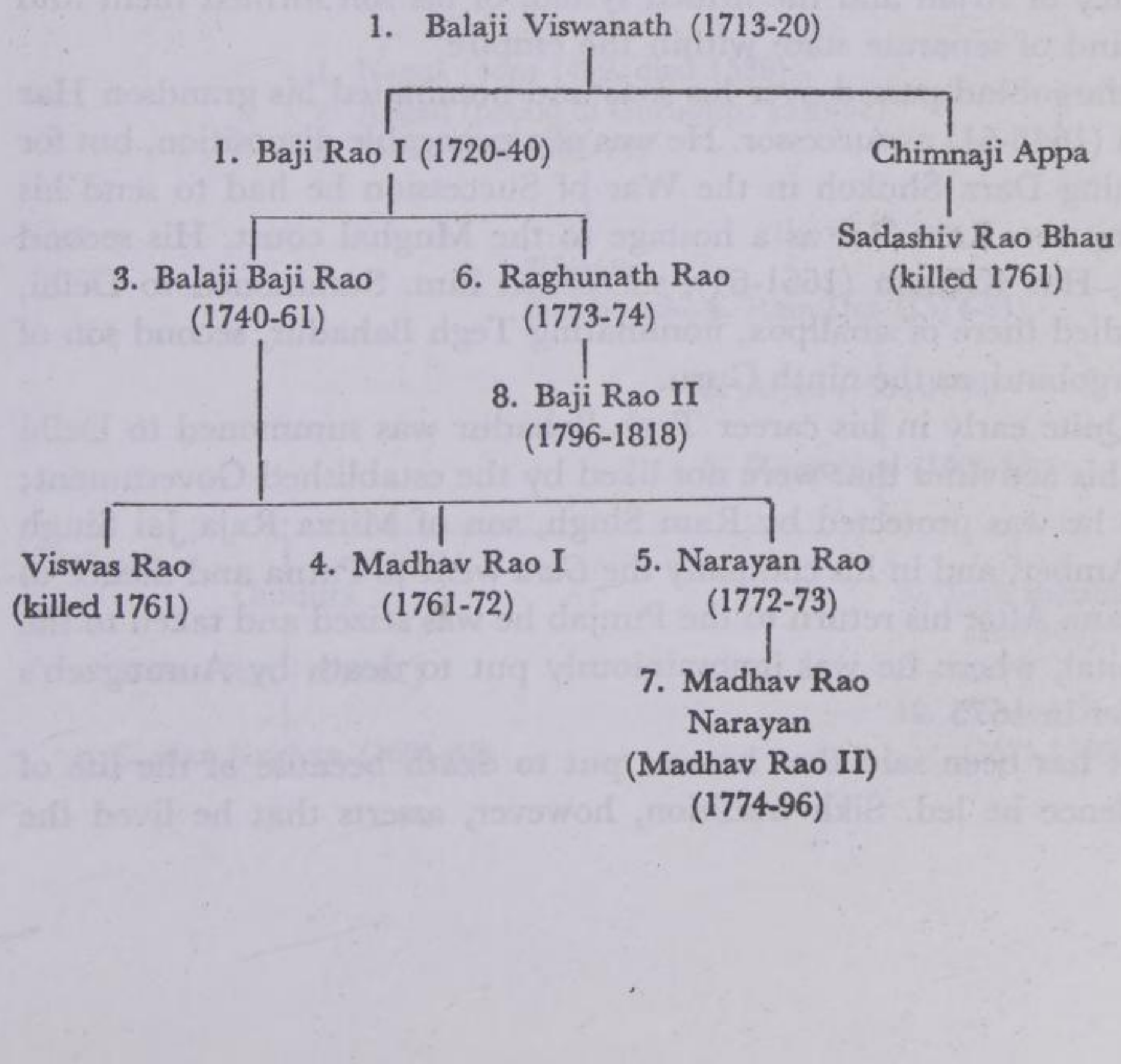
Third Battle of Panipat (1761): The victor of Udgir was, therefore, sent to the north to fight it out with Abdali. The plan of Sadashiv Rao Bhau was to build a bridge of boats near Etawa, attack Abdali in the upper Doab and raid the territory of Shuja-ud-daula of Oudh. But rains began too early that year, boats could not be secured, and Bhau changed his plan. He decided to attack Delhi which he succeeded in taking from its Afghan garrison in August 1760, but the problem of food supply could not be solved thereby. He next reached Panipat in October 1760. Abdali in the meantime won over Shuja-ud-daula, marched as quickly as he could, crossed the Jumna at Baghpat and came near the Marathas. Bhau entrenched at Panipat in November 1760. Skirmishes and minor battles took place for some time between the Marathas and the Afghans, who had entrenched about thirteen kilometres away. The Maratha army was, by December 1760, spent up, their food supply exhausted, their horses and guncattle fasting and dying.

The starving Marathas decided to fight a desperate battle and on the 14th of January 1761, marched out. The forces actually engaged have been thus estimated: Afghans 60,000; Marathas 45,000 excluding irregular troops and camp followers. The battle raged from

dawn to about 3 p.m. No victory was perhaps more complete and no defeat more conclusive. Very few Marathas escaped, and among the few were Nana Fadnavis and Mahadji Sindhia, destined to play a prominent part in Maratha affairs in later years. 'An entire generation of leaders was cut off', including Viswas Rao, the eldest son of the Peshwa, who was the nominal commander, as also Bhau himself. 'It was a nation-wide disaster like Flodden Field; there was not a home in Maharashtra that had not to mourn the loss of a member, and several houses their very heads.' The news of this terrible disaster hastened the Peshwa's death, which took place in June 1761.

The third battle of Panipat must be regarded as one of the most decisive events in Indian history. On that fatal field Maratha Imperialism received its greatest blow and the Peshwa's prestige was rudely shaken. The Marathas lost their hold on Malwa, Rajputana and the Doab; in the Deccan the fruits of the victory of Udgir were lost and the Nizam boldly assumed the offensive. But recovery was not long delayed; under Peshwa Madhav Rao I the Marathas defeated the Nizam, recovered their hold on Northern India, and brought Emperor Shah Alam II under their protection. By then, however,

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE PESHWAS


1. Balaji Viswanath (1713-20)
1. Baji Rao I (1720-40)
Chimnaji Appa
3. Balaji Baji Rao (1740-61)
6. Raghunath Rao (1773-74)
Sadashiv Rao Bhau (killed 1761)
8. Baji Rao II (1796-1818)
Viswas Rao (killed 1761)
4. Madhav Rao I (1761-72)
5. Narayan Rao (1772-73)
7. Madhav Rao Narayan (Madhav Rao II) (1774-96)

the Indian world was very much changed. The British had brought Bengal and Bihar under their control and established their suzerainty over Oudh. Panipat made it impossible for the Marathas to resist the growth of British power in the Ganges valley. In the south the temporary eclipse of Maratha power enabled Haidar Ali to consolidate his power in Mysore. Within the Maratha confederacy a great change came after 1772; Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaikwad became virtually independent of the Peshwa's control. Maratha Imperialism in Northern India henceforth meant the domination of Sindhia and Holkar, not the supremacy of the Peshwa.

SIKHS, JATS AND RAJPUTS

The Sikhs in the Seventeenth Century: A brief account of the Sikhs till the cruel death of Guru Arjan (1606) has been given in previous chapters. Under his son and successor Hargobind (1606-45) a transition to militarism became a feature of Sikh history. Hargobind was warlike; he kept a stable of 800 horses and 300 mounted followers. 'He grasped a sword and marched with his devoted followers among the troops of the empire or boldly led them to oppose or overcome provincial governors or personal enemies. During the ministry of Hargobind the Sikhs increased greatly in numbers and the fiscal policy of Arjan and the armed system of his son formed them into a kind of separate state within the empire.'

Hargobind passed over his sons and nominated his grandson Har Rai (1645-61) as successor. He was of a peaceable disposition, but for joining Dara Shukoh in the War of Succession he had to send his eldest son Ram Rai as a hostage to the Mughal court. His second son, Har Krishan (1661-64), succeeded him. Summoned to Delhi, he died there of smallpox, nominating Tegh Bahadur, second son of Hargobind, as the ninth Guru.

Quite early in his career Tegh Bahadur was summoned to Delhi for his activities that were not liked by the established Government; but he was protected by Ram Singh, son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Amber, and in his company the *Guru* went to Patna and thence to Assam. After his return to the Punjab he was seized and taken to the capital, where he was ignominiously put to death by Aurangzeb's order in 1675.

It has been said that he was put to death because of the life of violence he led. Sikh tradition, however, asserts that he lived the

harmless life of the wandering devotee. This incident, however, powerfully helped the transformation of the Sikhs into a martial people. Before starting for Delhi in answer to Imperial summons he girded upon his young son Gobind the sword of Hargobind, thus hailing him as his successor in the event of his execution.

Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708): The last apostle of the Sikhs awakened his followers to a new life. He established the *Khalsa* or the theocracy of the *Singhs*. The philosophical basis of the religion remained unchanged, but the outward forms and ceremonies were transformed. His followers were to be henceforth called *Singhs* or lions. The rite of initiation was to be called *pahul*. Their watchword should be, 'Hail Guru'. They should honour the memory of Guru Nanak and his successors. They were to have long hair, dagger, comb, bangle, breeches. They should devote their energies to steel alone, ever wage war and slay enemies. By means of a new name, new dress, new equipment and new ceremonies 'he called in the human energy of the Sikhs from all other sides and made it flow in a particular direction only. By this means the Sikh nation was poured into the mould of a special purpose'. A religious teacher, a military leader and a rebel, it is not easy to place his actions in due order. He fought with the hill Rajas of the Punjab and also with the forces of the

The Sikh Gurus

1. Nanak (born 1469, died 1538)
2. Angad (period of Guruship: 1538-52)
3. Amar Das (1552-74)

Daughter
Bibi Bhani = 4. Ram Das (1574-81)

5. Arjan (1581-1606)

6. Hargobind (1606-45)

Gurditta	9. Tegh Bahadur (1664-75)
7. Har Rai (1645-61)	10. Gobind Singh (1675-1708)
8. Har Krishan (1661-64)	

Mughal Empire; his sons were put to death by the Mughal *Faujdar* of Sirhind. He sided with Bahadur Shah in the war of succession proceeding with him to South India, where he was murdered by an Afghan in 1708. He declared that the Guru would henceforth be found in the *Khalsa*. So the personal Gurushipwas abolished.

Sikh War of Independence in the Eighteenth Century: Banda succeeded Guru Gobind Singh as the temporal leader of the Sikhs. He took Sirhind and slew its *Faujdar* who was responsible for the murder of Guru Gobind Singh's sons. He occupied a portion of the country at the foot of the hills, but was driven out of his stronghold at Lohgarh by Bahadur Shah and Munim Khan. He reappeared in Sirhind in the days of Farrukh Siyar; compelled to take shelter in the fort of Gurdaspur, he was reduced by starvation to submit. He was put to death at Delhi with his followers in 1716. An active persecution was kept up against the Sikhs by the Governors of the Punjab. But the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali created conditions favourable to the Sikhs, who never lost the impress of Guru Gobind Singh even in the days of their greatest adversity.

After 1752 the Mughal power ceased to count so far as the Punjab was concerned and the Sikhs had to fight with Ahmad Shah Abdali. After Abdali's great victory over the Marathas at Panipat (1761) it was expected that he would be able to strengthen his hold over the Punjab. But the hovering and harassing tactics of the Sikh marauding bands and the elusive nature of the enemy whom he could not crush wore out the great warrior. He gained a victory over them in 1762 near Ludhiana in which he killed about 12,000 Sikhs, but victory was ineffective. By 1767 he practically confessed that he was beaten and left the Sikhs to themselves.

The success of the Sikhs in the long contest against Abdali was due to several causes. In the first place, the Sikh method of warfare was admirably well suited to the circumstances. Having no chance of success in pitched battles they cut off his supplies and tried to ruin him without fighting. Ahmad Shah could not reach them in their mountain retreats. Secondly, he could not spare a sufficient number of troops in the Punjab to prevent the Sikhs from recovering their possessions and power. Thirdly, there were frequent rebellions in Afghanistan that often diverted his attention from India. Finally, an individual, however gifted, however great, is always at a disadvantage in fighting with a nation in arms, fired by a consciousness of its own destiny. Ahmad Shah is said to have remarked that it

would be necessary for the complete reduction of Sikh power to wait until their religious fervour had evaporated. During the war of independence the Sikhs presented an almost united front, and for the successful termination of this struggle credit should be given to the entire nation, not to any individual. After the virtual extinction of Abdali's power the disciples of Guru Gobind Singh parcelled out the greater portion of the Punjab among themselves and formed twelve *Misls* or associations of warriors led by powerful chiefs, thus developing what has been described as 'theocratic confederate feudalism'.

Rise and Fall of the Jats: A branch of the Jat people was settled in the country south of the Jumna between Agra and Delhi. They occupied a position on the flank of the road between the two capitals and of the routes leading from these through Ajmer towards the Deccan. In the reign of Aurangzeb this robust race began to create great trouble. The rebellion of Gokla Jat was suppressed in 1669, that of Raja Ram Jat in 1688. The Jats under Bhajja became troublesome again in 1705-1707. Bhajja's son Churaman was taken into Imperial service in 1707. He fell into disfavour in the reign of Muhammad Shah and consolidated his position by constructing a stronghold at a place called Thun. It was deemed necessary to make an attempt to suppress him. Sawai Jai Singh of Amber was sent against him in 1716. He invested Thun, but the courtiers of Delhi persuaded the Emperor to agree to accept terms favourable to the Jat chief. The Jat leader remained a formidable power too near the Imperial capital. Troubles were created by the sons of Churaman who took refuge in the fort of Thun. Churaman's nephew, Badan Singh, joined the imperialists who succeeded in taking Thun in 1721. Badan Singh now became the Jat chief.

After Badan Singh's death (1756) his adopted son and successor, Suraj Mal, made the Jats a very formidable power in Hindustan. Badan Singh and Suraj Mal raised or repaired four almost impregnable fortresses in their dominions—Dig, Kumbher, Bharatpur, Ver. Suraj Mal also disciplined a body of cavalry after a method of his own. The Marathas as well as Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded his country on more than one occasion. He would on such occasions retire to his fortresses and bid defiance to the invaders. At the time of the Afghan invasion of 1757, the Jats offered the most stubborn resistance at Chaumuha when the Afghans tried to plunder Mathura.

The Jats failed to stem the tide of invasion, but theirs was perhaps the most stubborn resistance against Abdali on record.

When Ahmad Shah Abdali withdrew after the Panipat campaign the Jat Raja was perhaps the strongest potentate in North India 'with absolutely unimpaired forces and an overflowing treasury'. He captured Agra fort in June 1761. Unfortunately for the Jat Kingdom, Suraj Mal was killed in 1763 in a petty skirmish with Najib-ud-daula who was at that time dictator of Delhi. His son, Jawahir Singh, succeeded him. He had a stormy career. He was assassinated in 1768. The Jat power now began to decline. It was torn by family dissensions and factious opposition. The Imperial army of Shah Alam II led by Mirza Najaf Khan recovered Agra in 1773 and Dig in 1776. The declining Jat power continued to exist with its centre in the impregnable fort of Bharatpur.

The Rajputs in the Eighteenth Century: Rana Raj Singh of Mewar died in 1680. His State, unrivalled in its pre-eminence in the eyes of Hindu India, fell into the background due to the weakness of his successors and their isolation from the Mughal court. Amber had played a very important part in Mughal history under Bhagwan Das, Man Singh and Mirza Raja Jai Singh. Jodhpur was perhaps equally important in the Mughal period and the Rathor soldiery formed a very important element in the Mughal army. The thirty years' war in Marwar after Jaswant Singh's death eclipsed that State for some time. In the days of Muhammad Shah two prominent chiefs of Rajputana, Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur and Abhai Singh of Marwar, were pre-eminent in the Mughal court. Jai Singh died in 1743 and Abhai Singh in 1749.

With the dissolution of the Mughal Empire Rajputana lost that peace which the suzerainty of the Mughals had imposed and maintained for about two centuries. 'Rajputana became a zoological garden with the barriers of cages thrown down and the keepers removed.' There were three storm centres—Bundi, Jaipur and Marwar—where rivals contended with each other for succession. The Marathas led incursions into these territories, siding with one of the claimants against the other. Holkar and Sindhia regarded Rajputana with its internal distractions as a land to be plundered. Even when the civil wars ended, Maratha visitations continued. This is the history of Rajputana until the establishment of British suzerainty —a story of war, domestic and foreign, with disorder and economic ruin as inevitable consequences.

INDEPENDENT VICEROYALTIES (OUDH, BENGAL, HYDERABAD)

Causes of the Rise of Independent Viceroyalties: The Great Mughals were effective rulers. They had a system of checks and balances in their provincial administration that made it impossible for the *Subahdars* to assert their independence. But under the weak Later Mughals (to be more precise, from the days of Muhammad Shah) the pernicious practices of uniting several rich provinces under the government of one viceroy, as also the lack of supervision, made it easier for the Provincial Satraps to become practically independent. The Nizam, who controlled the resources of all the Mughal *Subahs* of the Deccan, established the State of Hyderabad. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa formed an independent viceroyalty. The hereditary principle came to be acknowledged in Provincial Governments. These viceroyalties were at a considerable distance from the seat of the Central Government. But even viceroys nearer Delhi, like the Nawabs of Oudh, became practically independent.

The Nawabs of Oudh: Saadat Khan was a Persian immigrant from Nishapur. Appointed *Faujdar* of Hindaun and Byana in 1720, he showed great ability in the court intrigues in which alone a successful career could be made in those days. He was for some time put in charge of Agra and was also appointed to the government of Oudh. He was given the title of Burhan-ul-Mulk. After his failure against the Jats, he was removed from the government of Agra but continued to enjoy a semi-independent position in Oudh. In the battle of Karnal (1739) he was taken prisoner by Nadir Shah whom he induced to imprison the Mughal Emperor and to go to Delhi, but at the Imperial capital he was threatened with personal chastisement for his failure to raise the promised ransom. He committed suicide to escape dishonour.

He was succeeded in Oudh by his nephew and son-in-law Abul Mansur Khan, better known by his title of Safdar Jang. He rose to be the *Wazir* of Emperor Ahmad Shah. After his death in 1754 his son, Shuja-ud-daula, succeeded in the independent government of Oudh. He also enjoyed the rank of *Wazir* of the Mughal Emperor, the *rois faineant* Shah Alam II. After the battle of Buxar (1764) he gradually became a vassal of the East India Company.

The Nawabs of Bengal: Bengal, Bihar and Orissa became practically an independent viceroyalty under Murshid Quli Khan, the celebrated *Dewan* of Aurangzeb. Towards the close of Aurangzeb's reign Murshid

Quli Khan was the *Dewan* of Bengal and Azim-us-Shan was the *Subahdar*, and during the long absence of Azim-us-Shan from his provinces he was also placed in charge of the military administration of Bengal and Orissa. When Farrukh Siyar ascended the throne he was appointed Deputy Governor of Bengal with an absentee Governor, and was made *Subahdar* of Orissa in his own name. Murshid Quli was formally appointed *Subahdar* of Bengal in 1717 and continued at the post till his death in 1727.

Murshid Quli employed Bengali Hindus for the collection of revenues. He thus created a new landed aristocracy in Bengal. The land revenue system taken over by the British was in the main his creation.

Murshid Quli Khan's son-in-law, Shuja-ud-din Muhammad Khan, succeeded him in the government of Bengal and Orissa. Bihar was added to the viceroyalty of Bengal during his administration. He died in 1739 and was succeeded as a matter of course by his son Sarfaraz Khan in these Provincial Governments. Sarfaraz was defeated and killed in the battle of Giria in April 1740 by Alivardi Khan, a favourite of his late father, who had appointed him Deputy Governor of Bihar. In May 1740, Alivardi was recognised by the Mughal Emperor as the Viceroy of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

The new *Subahdar* found his provinces exposed to the incursion of the marauding Marathas from Nagpur. The *Bargi* incursions into Bengal began in 1742 and continued until 1751. In this incessant warfare Alivardi Khan was worn out and a large part of his territory ravaged. In 1751 he signed a peace with Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur on the following terms: Orissa was practically ceded to Raghuji, and from Bengal a tribute of twelve *lakhs* a year was to be paid as *chauth*. The river *Suvarnarekha* was fixed as the boundary of Bengal. Alivardi died in April 1756, and was succeeded by his grandson, Siraj-ud-daula, whose career is a part of the history of the rise of the British power in Bengal.

The Nizams of Hyderabad: The founder of the Hyderabad State, Chin Qilich Khan, better known as Nizam-ul-Mulk, was the grandson of an immigrant from Bukhara. He entered Mughal service in the early part of Aurangzeb's reign. Bahadur Shah made him Governor of Oudh. He became Governor of the Deccan for the first time in 1713, but he was soon replaced by Sayyid Husain Ali. After the fall of the Sayyids he again made himself master of the Deccan. In 1722 Muhammad Shah made him *Wazir* of the Empire; but he was so disgusted

with the frivolities of the court that he left for the Deccan in 1723. Suspicious about his loyalty, Muhammad Shah induced the Deputy Viceroy of the Deccan, Mubariz Khan, to resist him; but Mubariz was slain by the Nizam in the battle of Shakarkheda (in Berar) in 1724. Unable to undermine his position, the Emperor confirmed him in his office and granted him the title of Asaf Jah. In his tussles with Baji Rao the Nizam was invariably worsted, but the campaign of Palkhed or the defeat near Bhopal tank did not affect his position as the Viceroy of the six Mughal *Subahs* in the Deccan. He was in the north during the years 1736-40, making a vain attempt to save the Mughal Empire, first from the Marathas and then from Nadir Shah. The defeats suffered by him at Bhopal and Karnal proved that he was incapable of playing the part of saviour of the declining Mughal Empire. He returned to the Deccan in 1741, and suppressed the rebellion of his second son Nasir Jang who had acted as his deputy during his absence. In 1743 Nizam-ul-Mulk established his authority at Arcot and at Trichinopoly. He installed his nominee Anwar-ud-din as the Nawab of Arcot. He died in 1748. He has been described as the most outstanding personality in the declining days of the Mughal Empire, more skilful in diplomacy than in war. He has left his impress on Indian history as the successful founder of the State of Hyderabad.

He left six sons to fight for the heritage. The second son, Nasir Jang, succeeded him at Hyderabad, the eldest Ghazi-ud-din trying to play an important part in the Imperial court at Delhi. But Muzaffar Jang, a favourite grandson of Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was at that time governor of Bijapur and Adoni, set himself up as a rival of Nasir Jang. His cause was taken up by the French. Nasir Jang marched to meet him but was assassinated. Muzaffar Jang was raised to the viceroyalty, but he too was assassinated soon after. A French escort was led by the brilliant French leader Bussy and he declared Salabat Jang, one of Nasir Jang's brothers, as the successor of Muzaffar Jang. Bussy dominated the affairs at Hyderabad from 1751 until his recall by the French Governor Lally in 1758. Salabat Jang was without any ability. After the recall of Bussy he invested his brother Nizam Ali with full power. Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao followed his father's policy of hostility towards Hyderabad. A large Maratha army led by Sadashiv Rao Bhau succeeded in completely defeating the Nizam in the battle of Udgir (3 February 1760). He ceded to the Marathas territory yielding sixty *lakhs* of rupees, the forts of Asirgarh and Daulatabad

as also the cities of Bijapur and Burhanpur; he was allowed to retain the rest of his territory on condition of paying *chauth* to the Marathas. This might have been the beginning of the end of Asaf Jahi dynasty, but the Maratha disaster at Panipat had its repercussions in the south. It was followed by the death of Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao and this temporary paralysis of the Maratha power enabled Nizam Ali to regain much of what was lost. Panipat undid the work of Udgir. Nizam Ali, after his success, threw Salabat Jang into prison, where he died two years afterwards. With Nizam Ali's accession in 1762, the Asaf Jahi dynasty was once again secure and undisputed succession gave it as much stability as it was possible to attain in those days. Nizam Ali was defeated by the Marathas in the battle of Kharda in 1795. He ruled for forty years and died as a vassal of the East India Company.

CAUSES OF THE FALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

Breakdown of the Jagirdari System: It has been pointed out that *jagirdari* system, in its standard Mughal form, worked with some efficiency down to the middle of Aurangzeb's reign. But the strain of the war in the south undermined the complicated machinery of *jagir* assignment. As one contemporary writer put it, there was 'one pomegranate to serve a hundred sick men'. The emergency of war in the Deccan made Aurangzeb admit Deccanees on a generous scale as *mansabdars*. Mārathas outnumbered Rajputs. This would explain why the proportion of Hindu *mansabdars* which had declined in the first half of the reign increased appreciably in later years. Many *khanazadas* or sons of *mansabdars* could not get their *jagir* allotments. Bahadur Shah is said to have been persuaded to attack the Rajput states so that their lands could be given in *jagir* to some of his *mansabdars*. In the time of Farrukh Siyar *jagir* assignments became like paper orders and many new *mansabdars* had to wait indefinitely for their allotted *jagir*. A relevant comment was: 'How can an unlimited quantity be equal to a limited quantity?' Administrative collapse was inevitable.

Military Inefficiency: Irvine writes in his work, *The Army of the Indian Mughals*: 'Military inefficiency was the principal if not the sole cause of the Mughal Empire's final collapse. All other defects and weaknesses were as nothing in comparison with this. But it had lost all military energy at the centre. The rude hand of no Persian or Afghan conqueror, no Nadir, no Ahmad Shah Abdali, the genius of no

European adventurer, a Dupleix or a Clive, was needed to precipitate it to the abyss. The Empire of the Mughals was already doomed before any of these had appeared on the scene.'

The constitution of the army was thoroughly unsound. A trooper rode his own horse and if it was killed, he was ruined. He very often fled not because he was a coward but to save his horse which was his whole invested capital. As the army was organised he was the soldier of his immediate commander and was not taught to look beyond him. Even in the days of Shah Jahan, in connection with the three sieges of Kandahar, we find the Mughals outclassed in the weapons of warfare and methods of fighting. The admirable personal qualities of the Great Mughals alone enabled them to make an effective use of an instrument otherwise inefficient. About the later Mughals Irvine writes: 'Excepting want of personal courage every other fault in the list of military vices may be attributed to the degenerate Mughals—indiscipline, want of cohesion, luxurious habits, inactivity, bad commissariat and cumbrous equipment.'

The use of the bow persisted throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. The infantry was equipped mainly with matchlock which was an ineffective weapon. The heavy guns could fire once in twenty-five minutes. Huge guns did more noise than harm. The Mughal army was mainly an army of horsemen. But the system of descriptive pay rolls had broken down. There was no disciplined infantry. The Indian foot soldier was only a night watchman and a guardian over baggage. Camp followers and bazar dealers were very often included as combatants. The fighting men were about one-third of the total number in a Mughal camp. It is no wonder that they were helpless against the nimble Marathas led by Baji Rao.

Decline in the Character of the Nobility: The composite army of Afghans and Turks, Rajputs and Hindusthanis, that followed the banner of the Delhi sovereign, could only be efficiently led by leaders of tact and patience, gifted with personal bravery and administrative ability, but as J. N. Sarkar puts it: 'To the thoughtful student of Mughal history nothing is more striking than the decline of the peerage.' Bloody battles of succession, armed contests between rival nobles for Provincial Governorships, alienation of the Hindus, weak sovereigns unable to select right men, gross favourites, and dirtiest jobbing account for this startling decline in the character of the nobility. In such uncertain conditions adventurers from Bukhara and Khorasan could no longer seek a career in India. The classic example is that of

Muhammad Yar Khan who became weary of Nadir Shah's stern discipline, deserted him and remained in India, but he soon became disgusted with the state of things here and went back to Persia. Nadir Shah said, 'You feared the violence of my temper; how is it that you have returned to me?' The reply was, 'To be slain by a man like you is preferable to spending life among a pack of cowards.'

There was no patriotism in an army composed of Persian, Central Asian and Afghan soldiers of fortune. There was some loyalty to the sovereign's person, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the sovereigns were strong personalities. But an imbecile and intriguing Farrukh Siyar or a timid and wavering Muhammad Shah could not inspire personal devotion and prevent factious intrigues. Swayed by their favourites and guided by such *Wazirs* as the aged voluptuary Qamar-ud-din Khan or the incapable and selfish Imad-ul-Mulk, the Mughal Emperors could not prevent inefficiency and factious intrigues ruining the Empire. The Irani, Turani and Hindustani group consciousness was further complicated by family rivalry. Saadat Khan, an Irani, would betray his master for promoting a Turani; Safdar Jang, an Irani, would not come to the aid of the hard-pressed Governor of the Punjab because he was a Turani rival. Reverence and devotion to the head of the State, which Akbar and his successors had inspired, no longer kept the nobles within proper limits.

Internal and External Enemies: Repeated Maratha incursions into the Doab, Maratha conquest of Gujarat, Malwa and Bundelkhand, and the *Bargi* incursions into Bengal showed that the Mughal Government was unable to meet its own domestic enemies. The reign of anarchy had already begun when Nadir Shah invaded India. The invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah merely completed the progress of dissolution which had already advanced very far. The independent Provincial Governors, the triumphant Marathas, the irrepressible Sikhs and the determined Jats were fast undoing the work of Akbar and Shah Jahan when the foreign invaders came in and completed the process.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE COMING OF THE EUROPEANS

THE PORTUGUESE IN INDIA

Vasco da Gama: On the 17th of May 1498, Vasco da Gama and his sailors reached the shores of India, landing at Calicut. The discovery of a direct sea route to India was a great event. The project had been planned by Dom Joao, following the traditional policy of Prince Henry the Navigator. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope by Bartholomew Diaz made the realisation of the project possible, and Vasco da Gama carried out a matured plan based on authentic information gathered during half a century of exploration. The historical results that followed have made popular imagination rank him with Columbus. In 1502 the Pope gave the King of Portugal permission to style himself 'Lord of the Navigation, conquest and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India'.

Vasco da Gama's voyage of reconnaissance gave the Portuguese an idea of the articles to be found in the Malabar market and the wares that could be sold there. He was a crude sailor, and in spite of his stay for three months in a Hindu State he remained ignorant of the existence of the Hindu religion. He returned to Portugal in August 1499.

After him came Cabral. He reached Calicut in September 1500, established a factory there, but very soon quarrelled with the Zamorin. The Portuguese factory was levelled to the ground. Cabral secured valuable cargoes from Cochin and Cannanore. The Raja of Cochin, an enemy of the Zamorin of Calicut, became a friend of the Portuguese. 'The object of the Portuguese was now not only to hinder as far as possible trade between India and the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, but also to divert to Portugal all the trade of the East with Europe.'

Vasco da Gama came for the second time in 1502. He had now a large fleet at his command. An inhuman, greedy sailor, he perpetrated horrible deeds of cruelty, sinking pilgrim vessels without mercy, and by a policy of frightfulness trying to scare the Arab merchants away from trade with India. He erected a factory at Cochin and returned to Lisbon, leaving a small fleet to patrol the coast. The Zamorin of Calicut invaded the territory of Cochin, but Affonso de Albuquerque

now arrived with a small Portuguese squadron and drove him out of Cochin. Duarte Pacheco was left with a hundred men to defend Cochin against the Zamorin. With about 8,000 Cochin troops he held his own for about four months against overwhelming odds, the army of the Zamorin numbering about 60,000. A peace was then arranged.

The Portuguese now abandoned the policy of sending annual expeditions and in 1505 decided to appoint a viceroy who would remain at his post for three years. Francisco d'Almeida was the first viceroy. He was to build fortresses at Anjadiva (a group of small islets near the Malabar coast), Cannanore and Cochin. Anjadiva proved useless, but the Raja of Cochin became a Portuguese puppet. A Portuguese garrison at Cannanore held its own. The Zamorin's fleet was destroyed. Almeida also gained a great victory off Diu over a fleet sent by the Sultan of Egypt to drive away the Portuguese intruders from the Indian Ocean.

Albuquerque: Aflonso de Albuquerque succeeded Almeida with the rank of Governor in 1509. Next year he occupied Goa. Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur recaptured it, but Albuquerque recovered it not long after. He strengthened it, increased its commercial importance and made it the headquarters of the Portuguese in the East. He did everything in his power to encourage the Portuguese to take Indian wives in order to secure a permanent population. He captured Malacca in 1511, relieved Goa again in 1512, but failed in his attack on Aden. He succeeded in establishing Portuguese suzerainty over Ormuz. He died in December 1515, having established a Portuguese Empire with its system of naval bases from Ormuz to Malacca, from which they commanded all seaborne trade and held to ransom the vessels of all other nations. Almeida relied on the Portuguese fleet with bases at Cochin and other places patrolling the coast and commanding communications. Albuquerque's system was different. He would occupy certain important points and rule there, colonise select districts through mixed marriages, build fortresses at important strategic places and, wherever possible, induce petty local chiefs to recognise the supremacy of Portugal, if necessary by a yearly subsidy in gold.

Expansion of Portuguese Power: The Portuguese Governors who succeeded Albuquerque followed his trail. They secured Bassein in 1534 and Diu in 1537, erected a fort at Colombo in 1518 and by the middle of the sixteenth century established their hold over the island

of Ceylon. Under the Portuguese Governor of India with his headquarters at Goa five Governors ruled respectively over Mozambique, Ormuz, Maskat, Ceylon and Malacca. But the Portuguese never attempted to penetrate inland into the interior of India: Portuguese India is not a historical fact. They never ruled over any area of India that was outside the range of their ships' guns.

Portugal 'held the gorgeous East in fee' for the whole of the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, however, her Indian settlements fell one after another into the hands of the Dutch; the English later took the place of the Hollanders. The Marathas captured Salsette and Bassein in 1739. The Portuguese retained only Goa, Daman and Diu.

Causes of the Decline of the Portuguese Power: The ultimate decline of the Portuguese power in the East was due to several causes. The Portuguese system of mixed marriages produced a degenerate race that did not possess the military qualities necessary for the maintenance of an empire. It has been said that the East resented the intrusion of the West by absorbing and degrading the earlier western intruders. The Portuguese administrative system was also 'surprisingly ineffective', worse than that of the Zamorin or Adil Shah. The officials had no sense of loyalty, even the soldiers had the right of private trade, corruption was rampant. The Portuguese system was undermined by abuses and corruption.

The religious intolerance of the Portuguese was another important cause of their decline. The Franciscan missionaries arrived in Goa in 1517. Hindu temples were destroyed there. An Inquisition was established in Goa in 1560. An atrocious religious persecution began. The ecclesiastical supremacy established in Goa was alone sufficient to ruin the Portuguese Empire in the East. The horrible cruelty of the Portuguese in their dealings with the Muhammadans, their torturing and burning of relapsed converts, make one wonder why the Portuguese power did not collapse before it did.

After the decline of Vijayanagar Goa lost its importance as a trade centre. The Dutch and the British arrived to contest Portuguese monopoly. In 1580 Portugal joined her fortunes with Spain. Her ships and her men were engaged in Europe fighting the battles of Spain. Defeated first by the Dutch and then by the English, Portuguese domination of the eastern seas collapsed, their inferior naval power hastening the process.

Results of Portuguese Rule: The most important political consequence

of Portuguese rule in the western coast was that it checked the tendency towards unification in Malabar. The Zamorin of Calicut would have succeeded in his attempt to create a single state but for the Portuguese, who conciliated the local princes and with their sea power and with the support of the petty local chiefs frustrated the attempts of the Zamorin. The Dutch, who succeeded the Portuguese in their political influence in this region, fostered the political disunion of Malabar, which thus fell later an easy prey to Haidar Ali.

Bernier describes the Portuguese in Bengal in the seventeenth century as 'Christians only in name; the lives led by them were most detestable, massacring or poisoning one another without compunction or remorse.' The horror and loathing associated with the *Feringhees* made it almost absurd to suggest that the Portuguese have any place in the cultural history of India, but the Jesuit missionaries sent to Akbar's court—Aquaviva and Monserrate, who were sent in 1579, and Xavier and Pinhiero, who were invited in 1594—were virtuous, learned, active priests and they have made some contribution to Indian culture. They were disappointed to find that the Mughal Emperor and his courtiers were in no mood for conversion, but the *Commentaries* of Monserrate and letters of Xavier are rich mines of information for the historian of the Mughal period.

It has been said that the Portuguese successfully frustrated all attacks made on them by the Turks: 'Although we have no documentary evidence for believing that the Turks ever entertained the idea of establishing a naval and still less a military base in India, it is quite conceivable that if one of their fleets had succeeded in driving the Portuguese out of their fortresses on the Indian coast the establishment of the Christian powers in India might have been infinitely postponed.'

OTHER EUROPEAN MERCHANTS IN INDIA

The Dutch in India: The Dutch attempt to attack Portuguese monopoly of trade with the East began in 1595. 'The pent-up enterprise of the Dutch commercial class burst forth as if a dyke had been cut.' The United East India Company of the Netherlands was formed in 1602. They turned their attention to the Spice Islands. Moluccas was first seized from the Portuguese. Malacca was taken in 1641. Thus the Dutch seized the trade with the Far East. Between 1638 and 1658 Ceylon passed into their hands. Holland sent out an

admiral named Coen, one of the most distinguished men to take charge of Dutch affairs in the East. He founded the town of Batavia and succeeded in ousting the British from the East Indies, thus compelling them to concentrate their attention on India. Pepper and spices, the produce of Sumatra, Java and the Moluccas, were in great demand, and trade in these articles was the most lucrative. Early in their career in the East the Dutch made a mistake: they chose the East Indies instead of India. The East Indies have been very well described as 'a seductive bypath leading astray from world dominion'. The Dutch found very soon that it was inconvenient to pay in money for pepper and spices and noticed that cotton goods from Gujarat and the Coromondel coast were very much in demand in the Malay Archipelago. They decided to seize this trade from the Arab and Indian merchants and pay for pepper and spices by imported cotton goods. Secure in the Malay Archipelago, the Dutch succeeded in ousting the Portuguese from Malabar, seized Quilon, Cranganore and Cochin, and succeeded to Portuguese influence in this region. Under Van Goens, who broke the Portuguese power in the whole of Southern India, Negapatam became the headquarters of the Dutch in India.

'While the naval power of the Dutch was the despair of their rivals, they themselves were often inclined to envy the English, who were able to carry on their trade without incurring the vast expense for the upkeep of a navy and of fortresses and garrisons which burdened the budget of the Dutch Company.' The expenses of the Dutch Company increased throughout the eighteenth century. The English began to copy from 'the wise Dutch' their policy of the strong arm. At first they failed. But about the middle of the eighteenth century, we find the Dutch navy neglected and the British and French power growing. After Clive's successes in Bengal the Dutch attempted to retrieve their position. In 1759 they failed at Biderra; their fleet sailing up the Hughli was destroyed. In 1781 the Dutch again provoked British hostility and lost Negapatam and Trincomali in Ceylon. They later regained Trincomali through the efforts of their allies, the French. When the war ended, Negapatam was permanently lost. The Dutch could never be serious rivals of the English in India.

The French in India (1664-1740): The French arrived very late on the scene. The English as also the Danes had established trade settlements in India before the arrival of the French. *La Compagnie des Indes* was formed in 1664. The French trading classes, however,

lacked enterprise, and even Colbert's energy and enthusiasm could not ensure success to this new French venture. Pondichery was founded in 1673 and was developed through the energy, ability and courage of Francois Martin until it became the capital of the French settlements in India. But it was not until 1697 that the activity of the French Company in India became manifest. Their Surat factory also shook off its torpor. Their factories at Masulipatam, Calicut, Mahe, Karikal and Chandernagore did some brisk business, but nothing remarkable happened until the outbreak of the war of Austrian Succession in 1740.

The Danes and Other Europeans in India: The Danish East India Company was founded in 1616. They established a factory at Tranquebar in 1620 and another in Serampore in 1755. The Danes, however, played no prominent part in Indian affairs and their factories were sold to the British in 1845.

The Emperor of Austria granted a charter in 1723 to an association of merchants in Flanders. This was known as the Ostend Company. It was suppressed in 1731. A Swedish East India Company was chartered in 1731. Another Austrian East India Company was sought to be chartered in 1755. All these projects after some vicissitudes collapsed.

The English East India Company (1600-1740): In 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted to a body of English merchants under the title 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the Indies' monopoly of English commerce for a term of 15 years from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan. This Company is generally known as the *East India Company*. The first and second voyages were made to the Spice Islands under James Lancaster, the subscribers dividing up the profits of each undertaking among themselves. A ship of the third separate voyage came to Surat where it did some trade. William Hawkins, captain of this vessel, who could speak Turkish, saw Jahangir with a letter from James I. He was graciously received and allowed to reside at the Mughal court for some time (1601-11); but Portuguese influence at the court was strong enough to prevent any grant to the English of the right to trade in Mughal ports. In 1612 two ships under the command of Thomas Best succeeded in defeating a Portuguese fleet off Surat. This increased the prestige of the English. An Imperial *farman* was granted in 1613, and a permanent British factory was established at Surat. In 1615 the English gained another naval victory over the

Portuguese off Surat. The British could as yet bring very small trade, but the Portuguese had a very well-established commerce.

The position of the British merchants was, therefore, still precarious when Sir Thomas Roe arrived as accredited ambassador of James I to the Mughal court. He was in the Mughal court for three years. He could not get concessions for trade in Bengal and Sind, but he got privileges for trade in Gujarat. English factories were established at Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach, all under the authority of the chief at Surat, who was styled President. The British captured Ormuz in 1622, thus very considerably weakening Portuguese power in the eastern seas. Factories were established at Masulipatam in 1616 and at Armagon (north of Pulicat) in 1626. The English and the Dutch were welcomed by Mughal officials as a counterpoise to the Portuguese. There could not, however, be any co-operation between the two Protestant powers, and after the famous *Massacre of Amboyna* in February 1623, in which ten Englishmen were put to death after an irregular trial on a charge of conspiracy to seize the fortress, whatever co-operation existed was at an end. On the other hand, truce was concluded between the English and the Portuguese in 1635, and the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1642 definitely established accord between the erstwhile enemies.

A direct consequence of this Anglo-Portuguese friendship was the establishment of an English settlement at Madras near the Portuguese fort of St. Thome. The land was rented from the Raja of Chandragiri. The new settlement was named Fort St. George. It superseded Masulipatam as the headquarters of the East India Company on the Coromondel coast. Factories were also started at Hariharpur in the Mahanadi delta as also at Hughli, Patna and Cossimbazar to secure Bengal silk, sugar and saltpetre. An appalling famine occurred in 1630-31 which affected Gujarat, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golkonda. Thousands died of starvation or committed suicide, some even taking to cannibalism. This calamity had a lasting consequence. Depopulated Gujarat had now no calico to export from Surat; the weavers were 'dead or fled'. The calico trade, therefore, shifted from Gujarat to Madras. Moreover, indigo, an export of Surat, was driven out of the European market by the competition of the West Indies. Thus European commercial activity shifted from the west to the east of India.

The East India Company had its own internal difficulties. A rival body known as Courten's Association was started in England in 1637.

It got the support of King Charles I and developed into a rival venture. It established factories at Rajapur, Bhatkal and Karwar but began to languish and soon ceased to trouble the old Company. The East India Company's charter had been renewed in 1609, its privileges being indefinitely extended subject to revocation after three years' notice. But the monopoly, once broken by Courten's Association, could not be so easily re-established. A rival association, the Assada Company, proposed to establish colonies at Assada in Madagascar, and on some part of the coast of India. The venture, however, failed. An exclusive charter was granted to the existing Company by Cromwell in 1657. It lost its validity with the Restoration. But King Charles II granted a fresh charter. A Scottish Company was sought to be floated in 1695, but it failed. In 1698 the Company's position was seriously threatened when a new Company under the style *The English Company Trading to the East Indies* was granted the exclusive right of Indian trade, allowing the old existing Company to continue its operations until the expiry of three years' notice as required by the charter. Various complications arose. The old Company and the new Company hampered each other. The two were, therefore, united in 1702 under the name *The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies*. The shares were equalised and by the award of Godolphin in 1708 the union was consummated.

In spite of these troubles there was commercial prosperity in the East. But the Company's servants in all their grades—writers, factors, junior merchants and senior merchants—were paid ridiculously low wages, with the privilege of private trade. They became serious rivals of the Company's trade, and it was impossible to suppress this because they could, if necessary, carry on under the name of Indian merchants. The Company, therefore, gave up port to port trade and confined itself to the direct trade between England and India. The factories in upper India were abandoned and the activities of the Company were concentrated at Surat, Madras and Hughli.

Bombay was acquired in 1661 as a part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese Infanta who became queen of Charles II. The King made it over to the East India Company. Gerald Aungier, President of Surat and Governor of Bombay (1669-77), organised the settlement. It became the headquarters of the English in Western India in place of Surat in 1687. About 1686 Sir Joshua Child, at the head of the East India Company Directorate in England,

decided to follow the policy of the strong arm, in imitation of the Dutch, instead of trying strenuously to placate the local officials for the continuance of trade privileges. But his attempt 'to establish such a policy of civil and military power and create and secure such a large revenue to maintain both as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come' failed disastrously. A fruitless attempt was made to seize Chittagong. On the western side also local shipping was seized. In retaliation Mughal forces besieged Bombay. The English had to fly from Hughli. Peace was concluded with the Mughal authorities in 1690. It was a humiliating submission, one of its conditions being the dismissal of Sir John Child, Governor of Bombay, who had seized some richly laden Mughal vessels. Sir John Child died before the conclusion of the negotiations.

After their failure in Bengal the English had withdrawn to Madras. Job Charnock, their leader, was asked by the Mughal *Subahdar* to return to Bengal. He came back in 1690 and founded Calcutta on an unpromising site. The old privileges were restored by an Imperial *farman*. Kipling's description of the event is not inappropriate:

> 'Once two hundred years ago the trader came meek and tame,
> Where his timid foot just halted there he stayed,
> Till mere trade
> Grew to Empire—'

In 1714 an embassy was sent to Delhi under John Surman to obtain a comprehensive grant of trade privileges in all the three provinces; protracted negotiations led to the grant of three Imperial *farmans* in 1717 that formed the basis of the Company's trade. The right to trade in Bengal free of duties in return for the payment of 3,000 rupees per annum was recognised. Freedom from duties was also recognised throughout the Mughal Deccan in return for the rent paid for Madras. A lump sum of 10,000 rupees was to be paid for customs and duties at Surat. The Mughal Empire was, however, dissolving, and soon the United Company had to face new problems and to shape new policies.

ANGLO-FRENCH RIVALRY IN THE DECCAN

First Carnatic War (1746-48): The war of the Austrian Succession, which broke out in Europe in 1740, extended to India in 1746. In that war England and France fought on opposite sides. At that time

the French Governor of Pondichery was Joseph Francis Dupleix, who had already displayed much organising ability. The Governor of the French island of Mauritius (or Isle de France) was Mahe de La Bourdonnais, a man of unlimited resources and of buoyant energy. He had made Mauritius with its harbour (Port Louis) a solid *point d'appui* in the Indian Ocean. As the English and the French were now at war in India, La Bourdonnais with his ships came to the Coromondel coast. The English ships were led by an unenterprising sailor, Peyton, who withdrew to Ceylon after an indecisive action; he reappeared after some time only to sail away in alarm to Hughli. La Bourdonnais appeared with his ships and some troops from Pondichery before Madras, which made a pusillanimous surrender (1746). He was willing to restore the place in return for a ransom. This Dupleix refused and retained the place until 1749. The fleet of La Bourdonnais was crippled by a storm in October 1746, and he withdrew.

Nawab Anwar-ud-din of Arcot, appointed to the government of the Carnatic by Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1743, could not be an unconcerned spectator of these events happening in his own territory. He resented the seizure of Madras without his permission and sent an army under his eldest son. The French in Madras made a sally and compelled the Arcot army to retire to St. Thome. A tiny force under Paradis marching up with reinforcements succeeded in scattering the Arcot army as it barred its way at St. Thome. This ridiculously easy French victory is rightly regarded as one of the decisive events in the history of India. Orme, a contemporary historian, writes: 'It was now more than a century since any of the European nations had gained a decisive advantage in war against the officers of the Great Mughal. The experience of former unsuccessful enterprises and the scantiness of military abilities which prevailed in all the colonies from a long disuse of arms had persuaded them that the Moors were a brave and formidable enemy, when the French at once broke through the charm of that timorous opinion by defeating a whole army with a single battalion.' Cavalry fighting according to established Indian practice was useless against well-directed field artillery, and against infantry that could keep their ranks and reserve the fire. European predominance at sea was never disputed; European superiority on land now began. It is relevant to note that French troops at St. Thome were not entirely European but included companies of sepoys, *i.e.* Indian infantry trained by Europeans.

Dupleix failed to capture Fort St. David but repelled a naval attack made by the English on Pondichery (1748). When the news of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) reached India, Madras was restored to the English (1749). As they now acquired it by treaty they no longer paid the quit rent of 1,200 pagodas a year which they had formerly paid to the Nawab of the Carnatic. The first Carnatic War between the English and the French, apparently unimportant, 'set the stage for the great projects which Dupleix began to develop'.

Second Carnatic War (1749-54): The Governor of Madras as also the Governor of Pondichery had now troops that they could not send home until the beginning of the sailing season. They tried to place them at the service of some Indian power in order to save the expense. Floyer, Governor of Madras, took up the cause of the claimant to the throne of Tanjore and secured Devi Kottai with the surrounding country. The plans of Dupleix were, however, more far-reaching, leading ultimately to an unofficial war between the English and French Companies' representatives in India, without the sanction of the authorities in Europe.

Nizam-ul-Mulk died in 1748. His eldest son was at Delhi, trying to play a prominent part in Imperial politics. The second son, Nasir Jang, succeeded at Hyderabad. But his claim was disputed by his nephew Muzaffar Jang. A claimant for the *Nawabi* of Arcot also appeared in the person of Chanda Sahib, son-in-law of the late Nawab Dost Ali of the Carnatic, who had been killed by the Marathas in 1740. Chanda Sahib had been taken to Poona as a captive but was released after seven years. He wanted to recover the possession of the family and acted in concert with Muzaffar Jang. Dupleix decided to support Muzaffar Jang for the *Subahdari* of the Deccan and Chanda Sahib for the *Nawabi* of Arcot.

The French and their allies defeated and slew Anwar-ud-din in the battle of Ambur near Vellore (1749), and took his eldest son Mahphuz Khan prisoner, his second son Mumammad Ali flying for refuge to Trichinopoly. He made preparations there to resist Chanda Sahib and his allies. The British began to help him as they deemed it necessary to oppose further extension of French influence. Nasir Jang arrived to settle matters in the Carnatic and also to put an end to the pretensions of his nephew. He was joined by some English troops; the opposition of Muzaffar Jang collapsed and he surrendered to his uncle. As Nasir Jang dallied and tarried at Arcot, Dupleix made his preparations. Bussy captured Gingi. Nasir Jang then

marched out from Arcot to meet the French. He was assassinated on the field of battle on December 16, 1750, in the battle of Velimadupet, as he was coming out to meet his enemies, by the Pathan Nawab of Cuddapah, a traitor in league with Dupleix. The plunder of Nasir Jang's camp yielded so much spoil to the French 'that every one from the councillor to the writer, from the captain to the private, had his share and officers who only joined the service later looked back with regret to the happy days when a mere ensign received 60,000 rupees. Never had so much gold been seen at Pondichery. It was comparable to the solid gains of Plassey.' Muzaffar Jang was proclaimed as *Subahdar* in the place of his dead uncle. He marched north accompanied by Bussy and a French escort, but he was murdered on the way in February 1751, and Salabat Jang, third son of Nizam-ul-Mulk, was raised to the throne. Bussy remained at Hyderabad with his French contingent of 900 Europeans and 4,000 sepoys. A born diplomat, conciliatory yet resolute, he remained in power at Hyderabad until recalled by Lally in 1758. For the payment of his troops he was granted four *Sarkars*—the coastal districts of Mustafanagar, Ellore, Rajahmundry and Chicacole. Thus Dupleix's policy was very successful in the Deccan because of the skill and wisdom of Bussy.

But the division of forces proved fatal to the schemes of Dupleix. 'Although in the Deccan he secured unrivalled glory and almost incredible territorial possessions, he was disabled from securing the Carnatic and thus afforded the English both time and opportunity of making that breach by which they were to overthrow the whole structure.' A new Governor was now at Madras, a strong silent man of action. Saunders was appointed in September 1750, and he decided to encourage Muhammad Ali at Trichinopoly to resist. From 1751 to 1754 the two Companies fought in the Carnatic and the English succeeded in gaining the upper hand. The French siege of Trichinopoly dragged on (1751). Muhammad Ali suggested an attack on Arcot, now the capital of Chanda Sahib. Saunders entrusted this task to Robert Clive of the Company's civil service, who had joined a small military force raised by the Government of Madras under Major Stringer Lawrence. Clive boldly seized Arcot (1751) and defended it against the forces of Chanda Sahib for fifty-three days. It was a glorious feat of arms and marked a turn in the tide. The French army before Trichinopoly, led by Jacques Law, had to surrender in June 1752. Chanda Sahib surrendered to the general

of Raja of Tanjore whose troops were fighting by the side of the British under Lawrence. Chanda Sahib was beheaded, Lawrence not choosing to interfere. Thus Muhammad Ali became the undisputed Nawab of the Carnatic.

Dupleix was, however, irrepressible. He won over the Mysoreans and Murar Rao, the Maratha chief of Gooty, who were fighting as allies of the English at Trichinopoly. The Raja of Tanjore returned to neutrality. But Clive cleared the Carnatic of all French posts except Pondichery and Gingi. The Pondichery-Mysore-Gooty coalition was about to break up in 1754 for lack of money though Dupleix never despaired of taking Trichinopoly and spent over £350,000 of his own money. But the French Company had already decided to conclude peace; Godehu, one of the Directors, landed at Pondichery in August 1754. This meant the recall of Dupleix and the abandonment of his plans so far as the Carnatic was concerned. The unofficial war thus ended. The two Companies decided not to interfere in the quarrels of the Indian princes. Dupleix returned to France, where he lived until 1763.

Policy of Dupleix and Causes of his Failure: With his very clear vision Dupleix could see for himself that the Indian armies were helpless against European discipline, but this discipline could also be imparted to Indians in European service. In the disturbed state of things then prevalent in India he could easily establish French predominance by siding with one of the claimants with his European and Indian troops. He wanted to present before his masters the accomplished fact. The French Company had to import silver to India in return for her commodities. But if it acquired territory in India yielding a sufficient surplus to cover its investment, this annual drain of silver from France would stop. 'The surplus revenue of its Indian possessions would be exported in the form of commodities.' But he made the mistake of not taking the Company into his confidence and did not let his superiors know his plan in its entirety until it was too late.

One of his greatest defects was that he divided his forces. If Bussy with his troops had been brought from Hyderabad to Trichinopoly he could have perhaps taken that place and secured the Carnatic; but Dupleix was very anxious to maintain French influence in the Nizam's court. Developments in the Carnatic later led to the recall of Bussy and the collapse of French influence at Hyderabad. As Dodwell says: 'It is unwise to pursue two objects at once and to attempt more

than one has the means of accomplishing.' A quick victory in the Carnatic was necessary for the success of Dupleix's plans.

Moreover, as the war dragged on, money was found wanting. He somehow thought it impolitic to ask the French Company to send money and always drew a rosy picture for his home authorities. Bussy could not supply him the money he required. The military plans of Dupleix crashed to a large extent because he had not the sinews of war.

With Bussy absent at Hyderabad the French soldiers in the Carnatic could not cope with the ability and spirit of Lawrence and the brilliance and daring of Clive. Saunders, grim and tenacious, grasping fully the implication of his policy, was ever ready with his counter-moves and supported Muhammad Ali with all the resources of the English Company. He was thus largely responsible for the failure of Dupleix.

Dupleix had no idea of the importance of naval power, which was the one essential factor in any scheme of European domination in India. But in spite of his failure Dupleix must be regarded as the pioneer of European conquest on Indian soil; it was the spirit of this Frenchman and his associate at Hyderabad that ruled in the camp of his rival who established British power in Bengal.

Third Carnatic War (1756-63): The Seven Years' War began in Europe in 1756. The French and English settlements in India were again involved in hostilities, but when the news was received in India the Madras and Pondichery authorities had not sufficient troops to begin effective fighting in the Carnatic. The British were busy in Bengal against Siraj-ud-daula, and Bussy, dismissed at Hyderabad on account of the intrigues of Shah Nawaz Khan, could not be reinstated until August 1756. With his position thus rudely shaken, the latter was busy re-establishing French sway in the northern *Sarkars* (1757) and could not operate against the British in Bengal or at Madras. Clive thus succeeded in taking Chandernagore (23 March 1757) and in crushing Siraj-ud-daula (23 June 1757) undisturbed by the French.

Count de Lally, the general selected by the French, arrived at Pondichery in April 1758. He took Fort St. David and prepared to attack Madras. For making this supreme effort he thought it necessary to gather all the troops and recalled Bussy from Hyderabad. Pigot, the British Governor of Madras, assisted by Stringer Lawrence, put up a stubborn defence; a British fleet appeared and Lally had to raise

the siege (1758). The French detachment left by Bussy in the northern *Sarkars* was defeated by Colonel Forde (1758) who was sent by Clive from Bengal. The victories gained by Forde at Kondur and Masulipatam undermined the position of the French, already weakened by their failure at Madras. The French fleet under D'Ache suffered a defeat off Pondichery and sailed away, leaving the British supreme on the Coromondel coast. Sir Eyre Coote, the British general, succeeded in defeating Lally in the battle of Wandiwash (22 January 1760). Pondichery was besieged and capitulated (16 January 1761). Gingi and Mahe, the remaining French posts on the east and west coasts of India, fell soon after. Thus the work of Dupleix and Bussy was destroyed in 1760-61; the French power in India collapsed. The Peace of Paris (1763) restored the dismantled French possessions.

Causes of French Failure: The principal cause of French failure was the superiority of the British at sea. The British were so strong at sea that they could pour supplies into the Carnatic from Bengal and also bring soldiers from Europe, while the French, unable to replenish their resources for want of command of the sea, became relatively weaker as the campaign progressed. Mauritius proved in this campaign to be too distant a base for effective naval operations on the Coromondel coast.

During the third Carnatic War the British had the resources of Bengal at their disposal, and Bengal was rich at that time. Supplies from Bengal enabled the Government of Madras to fight for about three years without being seriously handicapped for want of resources. Mir Jafar proved to be unable to meet British financial needs. He was deposed in 1760 in favour of Mir Qasim, so that the British might get what they wanted from Bengal. After the arrival of Lally French India did not receive more than two million francs for the expenses of this decisive war.

Haidar Ali, already established in power in Mysore, entered into a treaty with Lally to help him in his war with the British. But in August 1760, Khande Rao, his *Dewan*, took up the cause of the *faineant* Mysore monarch and ousted Haidar who did not succeed in re-establishing his position in Mysore until after the fall of Pondichery. The army he sent to help Lally had to be recalled hastily. There was nothing to divert British attention from the single purpose of crushing the French.

The personal factor cannot be altogether overlooked. Lally, who was unpleasantly sharp-witted and cursed with an ungovernable

temper, was the worst leader possible at this critical hour in the history of the fortunes of the French nation in the East. The quarrel between the Pondichery Council and the French leader paralysed operations, and in the place of united counsels and energetic action there were dissensions on land and inaction at sea. After the surrender of Lally, Dubois, his Intendant, was cut down by another Frenchman Defer because Dubois possessed papers proving official corruption. This old, almost blind, Intendant of the disgraced French general had drawn his sword in vain to save himself. This crossing of swords was 'a fit image and striking resume of the history of the last three years of the French in India'. British superiority lay in the quality of leadership as also in the professional superiority of men like Lawrence and Clive, Forde and Coote.

PART IV

MODERN INDIA

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

BRITISH ASCENDANCY IN BENGAL AND OUDH

PLASSEY

Siraj-ud-Daula's Hostilities with the British: Siraj-ud-daula, grandson and great-nephew of Alivardi Khan, succeeded him as *Subahdar* of Bengal in April 1756. He was a young man of twenty-three. Two months after his accession he seized the English factory at Cossimbazar and then marched against Calcutta which he captured without any difficulty. Those who surrendered were crowded into a room which had been used as the military prison; the majority of the captives are said to have died of suffocation. This is known in history as the *Black Hole Tragedy*.

The truth of the story of the 'Black Hole' has been doubted by many and it is very likely that the vainglorious Holwell, from whom we get details of the story, touched it up to make himself play a conspicuous part in it. We have also no reliable evidence to prove the exact number of persons who remained to surrender. The accepted version of the 'Black Hole' has its perplexities which can hardly be reconciled with its authenticity. As many as 146 Europeans could not have been left at Calcutta on that evening. The true number was probably only 60. All the former residents of Calcutta whose manner of death could not be ascertained during a week of very confused fighting and complete breakdown of British administration were later described as 'perished in the Black Hole'.

Causes of Siraj-ud-Daula's Anti-British Policy: The anti-English attitude of Siraj-ụd-daula was due to a fear of English aggression. The story of the murder of Nasir Jang and of the protectorate established by the French at Hyderabad and by the English at Arcot was not unknown in Bengal. Ghulam Husain, author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakkherin*, tells us that Alivardi was apprehensive that a court faction would perhaps utilise the services of Englishmen and his successor's fate would be that of Nasir Jang. Ghasiti Begam, the aunt of Siraj, and her adviser Rajballabh appreciated the power and prestige of the English Company and wanted its help to oust the young Nawab, who was, however, too quick for the conspirators. Shaukat Jang, a cousin of Siraj, revolted at Purnea. He was advised to make an alliance with the English against Siraj. The young Nawab thus felt from the beginning

that he should reduce the power of the English in Bengal so that they might remain satisfied with trade 'on the footing they did in (Murshid Quli) Jafar Khan's time'. If Holwell is to be believed, Alivardi had also contempleted 'reducing their trade on the footing of the Armenians'.

Siraj-ud-Daula and the French: An expedition was sent from Madras for the recovery of Calcutta under the command of Clive, who occupied Calcutta on 2 January 1757. Siraj once again marched with his army to meet Clive. A night attack made by Clive, though far from successful, disconcerted the Nawab; he concluded a treaty with the English confirming their privileges, restoring what he had plundered from Calcutta, and granting them the right to fortify the city and coin money. The Seven Years' War had already begun. Clive attacked and took Chandernagore from the French in March 1757. Ahmad Shah Abdali had entered Delhi and was plundering Mathura and other places. There was for some time a rumour that he intended advancing eastward. The Nawab dreaded an invasion by the Afghans and dared not alienate the British. Though he was pro-French he was not in a position to alienate the British at that stage and Clive took the fullest advantage of the situation; the Nawab was thus deprived of the support of his natural allies against the English. The English were, however, conscious that the Nawab still entertained hostile feelings against them. He was writing frequently to Bussy in the Deccan. He took the French fugitives from Chandernagore under his protection.

Conspiracy against Siraj-ud-Daula: About this time Clive and the Calcutta Council became aware of a movement at Murshidabad for the subversion of the authority of Siraj. This young man, 'too ignorant and headstrong to use management with his dislikes', had alienated the great bankers—the Seths, as also Mir Jafar, Roy Durlabh, Yar Latif Khan and other prominent personages at Murshidabad. The plan of the conspirators was to dethrone Siraj and to confer the *Nawabi* on Mir Jafar, a prominent general of Alivardi's time. Armed contests between rival nobles for Provincial Governorships were a feature of the history of India in the eighteenth century. This was the consequence of chaos inevitable on the decline of an empire. The army was full of Persian, Central Asian and Afghan soldiers of fortune, eager to place their swords at the service of the highest bidder. These soldiers looked to their immediate chiefs; they had no loyalty to the state. The conspiracy at Murshidabad was regarded

by those Indians who took part in it as balancing one chieftain against another—'Siraj-ud-daula, the grandson of a usurper, against Mir Jafar, the most powerful noble of the province'.

Battle of Plassey (1757): The English felt that 'it would be a great error in politics to remain idle and unconcerned spectators.' Clive marched against the Nawab with an army of 3,000 (2,200 sepoys and topasses; 800 Europeans). The Nawab, surrounded by traitors, distrusted his army. Watts, the British Resident at Murshidabad, had already come to an understanding with Mir Jafar, Roy Durlabh and Yar Latif Khan who led the bulk of the Nawab's army and who promised inactivity in any engagement between the Nawab and the Company. On his way to Plassey in the district of Nadia, not quite sure of the result of the intrigues of Watts, the victor-to-be hesitated but ultimately decided to march forward. Even at Plassey his journal shows that he decided to make a night attack, and nothing was done but replying to the cannonade of the Nawab's army. But as that army began to fall back to the camp, Kilpatrick, during Clive's temporary absence from the field, ordered an advance. The order once given could not be recalled. The Nawab felt that he was betrayed and fled. He did not lose more than 500 men. The English army had 18 killed and 56 wounded. Their six pounders fired 511 round shots. The English army was at the mercy of the hordes of cavalry under Mir Jafar, Roy Durlabh and Yar Latif. 'But they were as inactive as were the Pathan Nabobs with whom Dupleix had concerted the destruction of Nasir Jang.'

This was the epoch-making battle of Plassey (23 June 1757). It cannot be considered as a great military achievement of Clive. As Malleson puts it, Clive must have been astonished at the numbers against whom he was about to hurl his tiny band. 'What if they should be true to their master!' was a thought which must more than once have traversed his brain as he witnessed that long defiling. Intrigue had done its work and distant cannonade led to complete collapse. The Nawab's army numbered nearly 50,000 men, but only about 12,000 forming the right wing and 12 pieces of cannon took part in this battle. All the rest of the army stood with folded arms and then promptly took to flight. The failure of Siraj was ignominious. He fled, was taken captive and then put to death by Miran, son of Mir Jafar. A few days later Clive placed Mir Jafar on the throne of Bengal.

MIR JAFAR AND MIR QASIM

Mir Jafar (1757-60): The era of puppet Nawabs now commences with the East India Company as King-maker. In theory the battle of Plassey only restored the English to the situation in which they were before the capture of Calcutta by Siraj-ud-daula. Mir Jafar granted to them in addition the Zamindari of the Twenty-four Parganas, but his unfortunate predecessor had also consented to it by the treaty of February 1757. They were also indemnified for their losses. Two clauses of the treaty of 15 July 1757, however, mark the establishment of British political and military ascendancy: 'The enemies of the English are my enemies, whether they be Indians or Europeans', and 'whenever I demand the English assistance, I will be at the charge of the maintenance of them.' By these clauses Mir Jafar placed himself at the mercy of the Company.

Distracted by the attack of the Mughal Prince Ali Gauhar, later known as Shah Alam II, threatened by the Marathas, with a very troubled financial position, and with the pay of his army in arrears, this weak and irresolute Nawab became more and more dependent on British support. The affairs of Mir Jafar were in such a plight because he started with a great financial handicap. He agreed to pay compensation to the extent of Rs 1,77,00,000 to those who had suffered in the siege of Calcutta. The total amount of gifts and donations to the English army, navy and officials has been estimated at about £1,250,000, Clive's share amounting to £234,000. But these were only the gifts that were proved or acknowledged. Clive was, in addition, given in 1759 an assignment of the revenue of the Twenty-four Parganas which the Company had to pay to the Nawab for its Zamindari right. When we read about the intolerable financial position of Mir Jafar we are surprised at the statement of Clive made later in England: 'Consider the situation in which the victory at Plassey had placed me. A great prince was dependent on my pleasure. An opulent city, more opulent and populous than London, lay at my mercy, its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles. I walked through vaults thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels. Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astounded at my own moderation.'

The revolution of 1757, and the manner in which it was brought about, undermined the foundations of the Nawab's government. But Clive, who was at the head of the Calcutta Council, succeeded in controlling it as also maintaining it so long as he remained here. In

1759 he helped Mir Jafar in expelling Ali Gauhar from Bihar which he had invaded. Mir Jafar, ill at ease under the British protectorate, was intriguing with the Dutch, who were also feeling very uncomfortable on account of the establishment of British ascendancy in Bengal. But the Dutch vessels were captured by the East India Company's ships and Colonel Forde coming from the northern *Sarkars* was sent by Clive against the Dutch land forces that were worsted at Biderra in November 1759. Mir Jafar failed 'to substitute for a foreign master a foreign ally'. The Dutch paid the English East India Company ten *lakhs* as damages. Clive was at the head of the affairs of the East India Company in Bengal from December 1756 to February 1760, when he vacated the chair of the Governor of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal and sailed for England.

Clive's successors, Holwell (February-July 1760) and Vansittart (July 1760-1764), were unable to maintain this arrangement. The Company as the dominant military power was controlling and maintaining the Nawab's government, but the Nawab, a usurper of British make, was failing to make the promised payments to the Company. Ali Gauhar was now the nominal Mughal Emperor because his father was murdered in November 1759; he was still hovering in Bihar. But he was successfully driven out of Bihar and the Zamindars who afforded him help were chastised. Miran, Mir Jafar's son and chosen successor, was killed by lightning. This brought up the question of succession and Vansittart, following the policy suggested by Holwell, decided to depose Mir Jafar in 1760 in favour of his son-in-law Mir Qasim. The revolution was quietly accomplished, Mir Jafar withdrawing from Murshidabad to Calcutta.

Mir Qasim (1760-63): A new treaty was concluded with Mir Qasim and he had to give presents 'which cast a sordid air over the whole business'. It was provided that 'the Europeans and Telingas of the English army shall be ready to assist the Nawab Mir Md. Kasim Khan Bahadur in the management of all affairs', and 'for all charges of the Company and of the said army and provisions for the field etc., the lands of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong shall be assigned . . . and the Company to stand to all losses and receive all the profits of these three countries.'

Mir Qasim was an efficient ruler. Within a short time he was able to pay a large sum to his English creditors and the Government at Calcutta was able to remit two and a half *lakhs* to Madras which enabled the English to prosecute the siege of Pondichery successfully.

Major Carnac succeeded in defeating the nominal Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II on the banks of the Son. Mir Qasim proclaimed himself Emperor in Bengal after his departure from the province. He was for some time apprehensive that the British would secure a grant of Bengal from the fugitive Emperor. He increased the vigour of his revenue system and so great was his skill in accounts that nobody could escape. He is said to have realised in two years almost double the old revenue of the country.

Mir Qasim was from the beginning the object of suspicion and hostility on the part of the majority of the members of the Calcutta Council, who were not guided by any sense of justice; having no sympathy with the Indian point of view, they cared only for their profits. The abuses of English private trade had advanced very far under Mir Jafar and precipitated an open war between the Calcutta Council and Mir Qasim. Under Imperial *farmans* the Company was exempted from the payment of transit duties on goods passing through Bengal. The Company's servants, who got ridiculously low wages, enjoyed the right of private trade with which the Company had no concern. They claimed that this exemption from transit duties extended on this trade as well, which claim was, of course, absurd. As Vansittart put it: 'It could never be intended by the Mughal King that private foreign merchants should be upon a better footing than private native merchants.' After Plassey Mir Jafar issued orders exempting from duties goods covered by a pass (*Dustuck*) issued by the head of an English factory. After Plassey the great power of the English intimidated people and the trade abuses grew. The privilege was so abused that Mir Qasim felt that he must try to settle the matter. Not only were these *Dustucks* used for the private goods of the Company's servants, these were even sold to Indian merchants. Warren Hastings remarked in 1762 that such a system 'can bode no good to the Nabob's revenues, to the quiet of the country or the honour of our nation.' A very reasonable plan was discussed by the Nawab with Vansittart and Warren Hastings, and an agreement was arrived at. But the Calcutta Council would not agree and turned the proposal down. Furious with this rebuff, Mir Qasim remitted all duties on Indian and European traders alike. Matters came to a head at Patna where Ellis, chief of the English factory, tried to seize the city; he was defeated and war began (1763).

Dodwell says that 'it was a war of circumstances rather than of intentions.' After all that had happened after Plassey it was absurd to

expect an equipoise between the East India Company and the Nawab of Bengal and a conflict was inevitable. The outrageous proceedings of the Calcutta Board and of Ellis at Patna must not make us blind to the inevitability of the failure of the system of Vansittart. Mir Qasim had discharged the Company's debt, paid the arrears of his army, retrenched the expenses of his court, reduced the power of the zamindars and established an effective government. He had withdrawn to Monghyr from Murshidabad and there raised an army on European model with the help of European adventurers like the Alsatian Reinhard, better known as Samru, and the Armenian Marcar.

When war was precipitated by the assault of the city of Patna by Ellis, Major Adams took the field with an army of 1,000 Europeans and 400 sepoys against Mir Qasim's army of 15,000 to 20,000 men. But Mir Qasim had no aptitude for war and his soliders, led by adventurers, guided only by their selfish instincts, were defeated in successive engagements near the banks of the Ajai river, at Katwa, at Gheria and at Udhuanala (1763). Adams advanced upon Monghyr and Mir Qasim fled to Patna. There he killed the English prisoners who had fallen into his hands. Adversity developed the cruel side of his nature and he murdered all his enemies who had the misfortune to fall into his hands.

He then fled to Oudh and induced Shuja-ud-daula, the Nawab of Oudh, who was the *Wazir* of the nominal Mughal Emperor, as also the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, to become his allies. The terms of co-operation were agreed upon. Carnac, who led the British army now, was supine. The confederates advanced up to Patna but failed to take the city and had to fall back. Major Hector Munro, who succeeded Carnac, restored discipline in British ranks and took the offensive. Shuja-ud-daula, who was now fighting for himself, was after a stubborn contest completely defeated at Buxar (22 October 1764). He fled into the Rohilla country. Oudh was overrun, Shah Alam joined the English camp, and Mir Qasim became a fugitive, to die in 1777 at Delhi in extreme poverty.

Mir Jafar Restored (1763-65): Meanwhile Mir Jafar had been restored in July 1763. He signed a new treaty in which he agreed to limit the number of troops he would maintain, to receive a permanent Resident at his *Durbar* and to levy only a duty of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on English trade in salt. He promised to pay 30 *lakhs* for the expenses of the war, to make a donation of 25 *lakhs* to the British army and half

of that to the British navy, and to pay compensation to private individuals for the losses they had suffered. In the words of Scrafton: 'The Nabob became no more than a banker for the Company's servants, who could draw upon him as often and to as great an amount as they pleased.'

Mir Jafar died early in 1765 and his successor, Najm-ud-daula, had to agree to appoint a minister who was to be nominated by the English and who could not be removed without English approval. He was to maintain only such troops as were necessary 'for the dignity of his own person and the business of collections throughout the provinces'. The Nawab was thus deprived of any independent military support for his executive. He became a figurehead with the administration in the hands of the nominees of the English. The Calcutta Councillors again took large presents but they combined their traffic in *Nawabship* with the assumption of absolute military supremacy in Bengal. Affairs were otherwise in great disarray when Clive reached Calcutta in May 1765, as the Governor of Bengal for the second time.

DEWANI AND DOUBLE GOVERNMENT

Problems before Clive (1765-67): Clive had to face a political as also an administrative problem. He had to settle the exact nature of British relations with the Mughal Emperor, the Nawab *Wazir* of Oudh and the Nawab of Bengal. The administrative questions that required solution were no less difficult—to restore discipline in the Company's service, civil and military, and to put an end to the abuses of the past.

Treaty with the Nawab of Oudh (1765): Vansittart had promised Oudh to the Mughal Emperor. Clive, however, thought it proper to come to terms with Shuja-ud-daula and restored him to his dominions. According to the terms of the treaty of Allahabad, Shuja-ud-daula was to pay fifty *lakhs* to the East India Company for the expenses of the late war, and to enter into a defensive alliance with the Company. The Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, was put in full possession of Kora and Allahabad as a royal demesne for the support of his dignity and expenses. The union between Shuja-ud-daula and the East India Company proved to be firm. Clive did not want to pursue a policy of conquest. He wrote: 'If ideas of conquest were to be the rule of our conduct, I foresee that we should, by necessity, be led from acquisition to acquisition until we had the whole empire up

in arms against us.' He hoped that Oudh would be a dependent buffer State.

Grant of Dewani by Shah Alam (1765): In Bengal the process of exhausting the Nawab's functions was continued. On August 12, 1765, Clive secured from the Mughal Emperor a *farman* granting the East India Company the *Dewani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, promising in return to remit regularly the sum of 26 *lakhs* of rupees as royal revenue. The Nawab of Bengal sank into a mere pensioner; he was to be paid the annual sum of 53 *lakhs* of rupees for the support of the *Nizamat*. Clive established Double Government in theory, with the Company as the *Dewan*, and the Nawab as *Nazim*. But the Nawab, having lost all independent military or financial support for his executive, became a mere titled pensioner. Clive, however, did not take over the administration of the country. The general administration remained in the hands of the Deputy Nawabs—Reza Khan in Bengal, Shitab Rai in Bihar. According to Clive's arrangement the Company left to the Deputy Nawabs the functions of *Dewan* as well as *Nazim*—land revenue and customs collection, civil justice, criminal justice and police. The Deputy Nawabs were to administer Bengal really in the interest of the Company while maintaining a fiction of the sovereignty of the Mughal Emperor and the formal authority of the Nawab. Clive had no sense of responsibility for the good government of Bengal. According to his system, the only addition to the duty of the Company's servants in Bengal was 'superintending the collection of the revenues and receiving the money from the Nabob's treasury to that of the Dewany of the Company'.

This 'masked system' which Clive set up, in which power was separated from responsibility, had been defended on political grounds. According to Mill, it was 'the favourite policy of Clive to whose mind a certain degree of crooked artifice seems to have presented itself pretty congenially in the light of profound and skilful politics'. But avowed dominion would have created difficulties at Paris and the Hague and would have perhaps aroused bitter opposition of the European commercial rivals. As Firminger says: 'So far as the Nabob's power and wealth was concerned, he was aware that the English had, so to speak, sucked the orange dry but he imagined that the skin and pulp left behind on the table would delude the other foreign guests in Bengal into the idea that the English had not as yet devoured everything worth eating.'

Regulations Relating to the Company's Officers: During his second

Governorship Clive insisted on the East India Company's servants executing covenants prohibiting the acceptance of presents except within certain narrow limits. This was in accordance with orders of the Court of Directors. Many people, however, thought that their signature to the covenant was a mere matter of form. In view of the prevalent attitude of the Court of Directors Clive could not suggest a generous increase of the salary of the East India Company's servants; but the orders of the Court of Directors prohibiting interference of their servants in the inland trade of the country were positive and he, therefore, tried to find a way out of this difficulty by setting up a society of trade under the control of the Council. Clive wanted to remunerate only the superior servants of the Company who were given shares in the society of trade which enjoyed a monopoly of the inland trade in salt, betelnut and tobacco, 'the three articles next to grain of greatest consumption in the empire'. Fifty-five persons were to share in the proceeds of the society, including the Governor. Clive sold his shares in 1767 to two of his colleagues for £32,000. The monstrous scheme was disallowed by the Court of Directors in 1768.

During his second Governorship, Clive's attempt to cut down the field allowance of the Bengal officers led to a mutinous combination of the European officers of the Company. Clive met this opposition with characteristic boldness. Most of the officers had to submit and the ring-leaders were treated with great severity.

Estimate of Clive: Clive left India in February 1767. He has been described as the acquirer of an Indian Empire for Britain but, as Mervyn Davis puts it, just as the Mughal Empire was not the work of Babur but of Akbar, so the British Empire in India was the work not of Clive but of the men who followed him. 'His gifts were too limited for the larger task. He had not the sympathy, nor the imagination, nor the knowledge, nor the understanding, nor the patience, nor the endurance necessary for the setting up of a great new system.'

Double Government at Work (1767-72): The system of government associated with the name of Clive continued under his successors, Verelst (1767-69) and Cartier (1769-72)—the Nawab a figurehead, administration in the hands of the *Naib Subah*, Reza Khan, a nominee of the Company, but the English Resident at the *Durbar* deciding every matter of importance. Power remained divorced from responsibility. Trade abuses continued and as Becher, one of the Company's servants, wrote in 1769: 'The fact is undoubted that this fine country which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary government

is verging towards ruin.' An attempt was made by Verelst to check high-handedness and venality by appointing English Supervisors for the *Dewani* lands, but it was found in the days of Cartier that they only made confusion worse confounded, and as they were permitted to continue private trade they abused their position of authority. What was really lacking was a principle of government adequate to the substance. In the words of Firminger: 'The Court of Directors imagined that all it behoved their servants to do was to lie beneath the tree and let the ripe fruit tumble into their open mouths.'

Famine of 1770: It was not until 1772 that the Company decided to 'stand forth as the *Dewan*' and assume responsibility for the administration of the country, but this decision was perhaps directly due to the great famine of 1770 which made Bengal 'a silent and deserted province'. In this terrible famine the Government relief effort was 'to the extent of £9,000 among thirty millions of people of whom six in every sixteen were officially admitted to have perished'. The famine was caused by the failure of rains but the supervisors were accused of creating 'corners' in their attempt to preserve sufficiency of grain in their respective districts. Notwithstanding this terrible famine with its 'dire scenes of horror', the net collections of the year 1771 exceeded even those of 1768. The system of government was brutal and inhuman, and even the Court of Directors felt that the only effective cure would be the assumption of direct responsibility.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

REVIVAL OF THE MARATHAS AND RISE OF MYSORE

PESHWA MADHAV RAO I

Revival of the Marathas after 1761: The third battle of Panipat seemed to mark the beginning of the end of Maratha Imperial power. But Maratha recovery was very rapid and Peshwa Madhav Rao I (1761-72), son and successor of Balaji Baji Rao, is entitled to the highest praise for this unexpected recovery of the Maratha Empire from the effects of the stunning blow at Panipat.

War with Nizam Ali: Madhav Rao I was in his seventeenth year when he succeeded his father. His uncle Raghunath Rao, a veteran soldier who was very fond of power, became the regent. Nizam Ali, who had practically ousted Salabat Jang from power at Hyderabad, tried to take advantage of Maratha misfortune and marched with about 60,000 troops towards Poona. The Marathas closed their ranks. Nizam Ali was defeated in a decisive battle in January 1762, but Raghunath Rao, who was perhaps anticipating a struggle for power with his nephew, granted him very favourable terms. Disputes now began between the uncle and the nephew. Raghunath Rao was supported by the Nizam. The Peshwa submitted to his uncle, but the unusually fine character of this young man enabled him steadily to get the upper hand. In 1763 he helped his uncle to defeat the Nizam in the battle of Rakshasbhuvan on the Godavari river, but Raghunath Rao again granted very favourable terms to the ruler of Hyderabad.

War with Haidar Ali: The Peshwa turned his attention against Haidár Ali whose rising power had become a menace to the Maratha territory between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra and who had already encroached on the Maratha sphere of influence north of Mysore. Haidar Ali was completely defeated in 1764-65, but Raghunath Rao prevailed upon the Peshwa to grant him favourable terms. Another campaign in 1766-67 further checked the growing power of Haidar Ali. The Peshwa also brought about the final submission of Janoji Bhonsle of Berar, a Maratha confederate, who was in league with the enemies of the Maratha Empire like the Nizam and Haidar

Ali. Raghunath Rao, eager for power and anxious to join these enemies of the Marathas, had to be placed under restraint.

Restoration of Maratha Power in the North: The Peshwa next sent two expeditions: one to the north to recover the power and influence which the Marathas had in Malwa, Rajputana and the Doab before Panipat, and another to the south to crush Haidar Ali. The southern expedition (1769-72) was brilliantly successsful. The Peshwa himself led it, but as he fell ill and returned to Poona, Trimbak Rao was nominated as the leader of the expedition. He completely defeated Haidar Ali near Seringapatam; but the Peshwa was dying and this news emboldened Haidar. Though Trimbak Rao's position was strong it was not possible under the circumstances to strive for the complete overthrow of Haidar; a treaty had to be concluded that left Haidar in possession of resources that still made him a formidable antagonist. In the north, the leaders of the Maratha expedition succeeded in reoccupying Malwa and Bundelkhand; in exacting tribute from the Rajput chiefs, in crushing the Jats and Rohillas, and also in occupying Delhi. They brought the fugitive Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, a British pensioner at Allahabad, back to the Imperial capital (1772). The Peshwa's premature death in November 1772 was responsible for the return of the Maratha army to the south and this hasty return undid its work in the north. In the words of Grant Duff: 'The plains of Panipat were not more fatal to the Maratha Empire than the early end of this excellent prince.'

HAIDAR ALI

Early Career: While the Maratha power was again making itself felt in the north as also in the south, the small State of Mysore under Haidar Ali became a factor in the power politics of those days. Haidar was an adventurer of exceptional ability. He began his career as a *Naik* in the army of Nanjaraj, the commander-in-chief of the Mysore State, and very soon became his favourite. In the service of Nanjaraj he took part in the Anglo-French conflict at Trichinopoly and there he gained his experience of the art of war. He was appointed *Faujdar* of Dindigul in 1755. He took advantage of the bankruptcy of the Mysore State and the mutinous condition of the Mysore soldiery to oust Nanjaraj and to become the virtual ruler of Mysore, the nominal King being retained as a mere figurehead. His *Dewan*, Khande Rao, in his turn strove to oust him from power and sought

Maratha help for this purpose. But the Panipat campaign diverted Maratha attention. Khande Rao was not effectively supported and Haidar succeeded in overwhelming him. In 1761 he became safely established in supreme authority in Mysore.

Territorial Expansion and War with the Marathas: Haidar now embarked upon a career of conquest and seized Sira, Bidnur (Nagar), Sunda and other places. But he had to reckon with the Marathas. Peshwa Madhav Rao was alive to this danger. The Maratha-Mysore wars of 1764-65, 1766-67, and 1769-72 diminished his power and prestige and might have ruined Haidar altogether but for the fatal illness and premature death of the Peshwa. Taking advantage of the chaos and confusion in Maratha affairs that followed the demise of Peshwa Madhav Rao, Haidar conquered Bellary, Gooty, Chitaldrug as also the Maratha territory between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra. He also secured Cuddapah. Towards the south he had already succeeded in bringing Coorg and Malabar under his sway. All Maratha attempts to check his advance to the Krishna in the years 1776-78 failed, though the Marathas were allied with the Nizam in their effort to stem this tide of expansion. As a French writer puts it: 'By steps rather slow but sustained, by a constant good fortune, he has formed a new power, comparable to a torrent that upsets and destroys all that it meets on the way.'

Relations with the English: With the English Haidar's relations were not friendly. There was enmity between Muhammad Ali of Arcot and Haidar Ali. Besides intense personal dislike, territorial disputes concerning certain districts also caused friction between these two Muslim rulers. The bungling diplomacy of the Government of Madras which controlled the Arcot Nawab precipitated a crisis. The Madras Government entered into an alliance with the Nizam in 1766 and agreed to help him with a British detachment. The Nizam advanced into the Mysore territory with his British auxiliaries at a time when Peshwa Madhav Rao I was also pressing Haidar very hard. Haidar prevailed upon the Peshwa to grant him peace; he also won the Nizam over and induced him to join him in his project of the dominions of the Nawab of Arcot and the British. The unprovoked enmity of the British made him furious and he invaded the Carnatic along with the Nizam. Thus the First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69) began.

Haidar and the Nizam were defeated by Colonel Smith in the battles of Changama and Trinomali (1767). The Nizam withdrew

and later concluded a separate peace with the Madras Government (1768). Haidar was not to be so easily thwarted. He knew thoroughly well how to keep the effect of his defeats confined within narrow limits. He was to some extent successful against other British commandants though he was not able to defeat Colonel Smith. The war dragged on. At the head of his swift cavalry Haidar made a sudden dash and approached Madras in March 1769. The panic-stricken Madras Council was thus compelled to conclude a treaty providing for mutual restitution of conquests and a defensive alliance (April 1769).

As a realist Haidar felt that this defensive alliance must be the mainstay of his foreign policy. The Nizam was undependable. The Peshwa was his principal enemy who had twice defeated him and seized valuable territory from him. British military power might be utilised in a defensive alliance against the Marathas. But when the Marathas again invaded his territory (1769-72) he requested the British in vain to come to his aid. The Madras Government was shifty, intractable and undependable. Even after 1772 he tried to bring about a closer rapproachement with Muhammad Ali and the Madras Government. But he grew disgusted with their shifts and subterfuges. He felt that he had to reckon with the prospect of their joining an offensive alliance against him in future. When the First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-83) began, the Marathas with a better sense of the realities of the situation approached him and the active anti-Maratha phase of his career ended. War with the British being more or less inevitable after this, the main preoccupation of his life as that of his son later on was to crush the British. As Haidar told a British ambassador later, he decided to expunge the English name from the Carnatic.

FOREIGN POLICY OF HASTINGS

Revision of Clive's Foreign Policy by Warren Hastings: When the Marathas reappeared in Northern India in 1769, occupied Delhi in 1771 and induced the Mughal Emperor to come to Delhi and place himself under Maratha protection, Warren Hastings, Governor of Bengal (1772-74), naturally found that in the changed circumstances Clive's foreign policy required revision. The districts of Kora and Allahabad had been given to the Mughal Emperor. Now that he was in Maratha custody and the Maratha menace was real, Hastings decided to restore Kora and Allahabad to the Nawab of Oudh who

was to pay 50 *lakhs* for this restoration. The payment of the tribute of 26 *lakhs* to Shah Alam was also discontinued. The other important British problem in foreign affairs concerned Rohilkhand.

British Treaty with Oudh (1773): 'The central pillar of Hastings's foreign policy was the alliance with Oudh.' He tried to strengthen Oudh in every way. He concluded a treaty with the Nawab of Oudh at Banaras in August 1773. He sought to establish a definite agreement with Shuja-ud-daula in place of the loose manner in which British concerns with him were conducted. The Nawab raised the question of Rohilkhand, which was now exposed to Maratha invasion. The Rohilla Afghans formed a loose confederacy and ruled over a fertile country along the base of the Himalayas. Warren Hastings referred to the strategic importance of the Rohilla country in the following words: 'It is to the province of Oudh, in respect to both its geographical and political relations, exactly what Scotland was to England before the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The reduction of this territory would have completed the defensive line of the Vizier's dominions and of course left us less to defend, as he subsists on our strength entirely.' This was the policy underlying what is called the Rohilla War.

The Rohilla War (1774): The events leading up to the Rohilla War and the details of the war are not pleasant reading. In June 1772, Hafiz Rahamat Khan, the Rohilla chief, agreed to pay Shuja-ud-daula 40 *lakhs* if he succeeded in compelling the Marathas to withdraw from the Rohilla country. The treaty was signed in the presence of Sir Robert Barker, the British commander-in-chief. The Marathas withdrew, came again in 1773, but again withdrew. They had soon to return to the Deccan on account of domestic complications following the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao I. Shuja-ud-daula demanded payment from the Rohillas but they declined to pay. When the treaty of Banaras was concluded he wanted British help to punish the Rohillas and to conquer Rohilkhand. He promised to meet all the expenses of the campaign and to pay a sum of 40 *lakhs*. Hastings agreed. The Nawab, however, changed his mind. But in February 1774, the vacillating Nawab asked for British aid in terms of the treaty of Banaras. A British army under Colonel Champion marched to Rohilkhand and, with Oudh forces, defeated and killed Hafiz Rahamat Khan at Mirankatra in April 1774. The Rohillas were driven out and the country was incorporated within the dominions of Oudh.

The Nawab *Wazir* had at one stage desired to give up the Rohilla

expedition to which Warren Hastings had readily agreed. Hastings wrote then: 'I was glad to be freed from the Rohilla expedition because I was doubtful of the judgement which would have been passed upon it at home, where I see too much stress laid upon general maxims and too little attention given to the circumstances which require an exception to be made for them.' Lyall criticises the political immorality of the whole transaction. He writes: 'A shifty line of policy is far more unsafe than a weaker frontier.' The invasion was unprovoked and the operations of Oudh troops were uncontrolled. The Rohillas 'were in reality suppressed for reasons not unlike those which led to the political destruction of Poland because they could not be trusted to hold an important position on the frontiers of more powerful states'. Oudh had to be strengthened against the growing menace of the Maratha power; so the Rohillas were sacrificed. The financial part of the transaction was the most avowedly cynical aspect of it. Hastings himself observed: 'The absence of the Marathas and the weak state of the Rohillas promised an easy conquest of them, and I own that such was my idea of the Company's distress at home, added to my knowledge of their wants abroad, that I should have been glad of any occasion to employ their forces, that saves so much of their pay and expenses.'

Warren Hastings as Governor-General (1774-85): By strengthening and giving armed support to Oudh Warren Hastings succeeded in building up 'a firm breakwater against the incessant fluctuations of predatory warfare that distracted Northern India'; but as Governor-General (1774-85) he found the British power in India entangled by the Bombay Government in a war with the Marathas, and some years later the bungling diplomacy of the Madras Government was responsible for a war with Haidar Ali and the Nizam. Hastings found himself in the midst of a tremendous conflict against a combination of the most formidable powers in India—the Marathas, the Nizam, Haidar Ali—as also the European rival in India—France.

Origin of the First Anglo-Maratha War: After the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao I in 1772 his brother Narayan Rao succeeded, but he was murdered nine months later (1773) by some adherents of his uncle Raghunath and confusion began in Maratha history. Raghunath was recognised as the Peshwa, but the birth of a posthumous son to Narayan Rao led to the development of a concerted opposition.*

* See Genealogical Table, p. 397.

The child was formally invested as the Peshwa and Raghunath Rao became an exile and pretender. The Bombay Government in their anxiety to secure possession of the adjoining island of Salsette entered into an agreement with him. They seized the island of Salsette by force and concluded with him a treaty known as the Treaty of Surat on 7 March 1775. Raghunath Rao agreed to cede in perpetuity the islands of Salsette and Bassein with a share of the revenues of the Broach and Surat districts. The English agreed to assist him with a force of 2,500 whose cost he would defray. Thus began a war between the Council of Regency at Poona and the Government of Bombay.

The First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82): Colonel Keatings was sent with troops to Gujarat to act in concert with Raghunath Rao who was there. After some skirmishes a battle was fought with the Poona troops at Adas (Arras) on 18 May 1775. Keatings won, but at a heavy cost. In the meantime the Supreme Government of Calcutta expressed its disapproval of the treaty of Surat, declaring the war to be 'impolitic, dangerous, unauthorised and unjust'. In spite of the protest of the Bombay Government Colonel Upton was sent from Calcutta to negotiate with the Poona Government. He concluded a treaty which is known as the treaty of Purandhar (March 1776). The treaty of Surat was formally annulled. Raghunath Rao was to get a generous pension and to reside in Gujarat. Salsette was to be retained by the English if the Governor-General so desired. The provisions of this treaty included the cession of Broach revenues and payment of 12 *lakhs* to defray the war expenses.

Raghunath Rao could not understand the nature of this interference and he decided on his part to refuse these terms. The Bombay Government afforded him asylum at Surat in violation of the treaty of Purandhar. In this unsettled state of affairs a despatch arrived from the Court of Directors in which they approved 'under every circumstance' of the treaty of Surat. This emboldened the Bombay Government to disregard the treaty of Purandhar and they invited Raghunath Rao to Bombay. Another despatch of the Court of Directors in 1778 further emboldened the Bombay Government to form a fresh alliance with Raghunath Rao on the basis of the treaty of Surat. Suspicions of French intrigue at Poona added to the existing complications. The Bombay Government decided that Raghunath Rao should be installed at Poona as Regent for the young Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan and Nana Fadnavis, the leading Minister, and his Council of Regency should be ousted. They sent an expedition

towards Poona in November 1778. The army was composed of 3,000 men. It proceeded up the *ghats* but, confronted by a big Maratha army, fell back, and at Wadgaon found further retreat to be impossible. A convention disgraceful to British political and military prestige was signed at Wadgaon and the humiliated British army was allowed to retire (January 1779). To avoid surrender Raghunath Rao took refuge with the Maratha chief Mahadji Sindhia.

The Convention of Wadgaon was repudiated by Hastings. He had already sent a detachment under Leslie whom he had instructed to march by the land route to Bombay. Leslie embroiled himself with the chiefs in Bundelkhand. But he died in October 1778, and was succeeded in command by Goddard who led his detachment to Surat in safety. This successful march across the breadth of the Indian continent increased the prestige of British arms. Raghunath Rao escaped from the custody of Mahadji Sindhia to the protection of Goddard. According to Grant Duff, this escape was Mahadji's contrivance. But Raghunath Rao could no longer be regarded as of any importance and for all practical purposes the English now became a principal in this contest.

A general confederacy was now formed against the English. It was composed of the Marathas, Haidar Ali and the Nizam. The insane desire of the Bombay Government to show what they could do on their own initiative was only surpassed by the diplomatic blunders perpetrated by the Madras Government. The Nizam was alienated by a treaty concluded in 1779 by the Madras Government with his brother Basalat Jang, whom they took under their protection on condition of his allowing them to rent the district of Guntur. Haidar had become anti-English because he could not persuade the Madras Government to enter into a defensive alliance which he might utilise against the Marathas. He became exasperated by the British capture of Mahe, a French possession in Malabar, by the Basalat Jang affair, by frequent boundary disputes, and as a consequence of constant friction in Malabar. The Wadgaon Convention helped the building of this hostile confederacy. The Poona Government recognised Haidar's conquests as far as the Krishna. It was arranged that the Nizam would invade the northern *Sarkars*, Haidar would invade the Carnatic, Mudhoji Bhonsle of Berar would attack Bengal, and the Poona Government would continue the war on the Bombay side. Haidar could also count upon the possibility of French co-operation. France and England were at war since 1778.

Hastings struck hard. Mudhoji was bought off, and the neutrality of the Nizam was secured by giving up Guntur in 1780. Goddard, having concluded a treaty with Fateh Singh Gaikwad, carried Ahmedabad by assault in February 1780. Hastings won over the Rana of Gohad, who might be expected to give sufficient trouble to Mahadji Sindhia. In order to support him he despatched Captain Popham from Bengal. Popham escaladed the strong fort of Gwalior in August 1780, assisted by spies supplied by the Rana. Popham admitted later that he could not have taken it without the help of the Rana's men. This success was followed by important consequences. Sindhia had to hurry to the north. Goddard captured Bassein in December 1780, and defeated the Maratha army in the Konkan. But he made the mistake of advancing to the Bhore Ghat. He allowed himself to be entangled by Nana Fadnavis in negotiations which led to nothing, and in his effort to retire to canton for the rains he suffered a reverse.

While these events were happening on the Bombay coast the plan of Warren Hastings to create a powerful diversion in the heart of Sindhia's territory was further developed. Colonel Camac invaded Malwa and in February 1781, reduced Sipri, advanced to Sironj and succeeded in surprising Sindhia's camp and frightening him. Sindhia showed willingness to come to terms. He concluded a separate treaty with the British in October 1781, and bound himself to stand neutral. The British army recrossed the Jumna.

Treaty of Salbai (1782): Warren Hastings had earlier a plan of mediation through Mudhoji Bhonsle, but it was now considered better to negotiate with the Poona *Darbar* through Mahadji Sindhia. The treaty of Salbai was concluded on the 17th of May 1782, Sindhia being at the same time the plenipotentiary of the Peshwa and the mutual guarantor for both parties for the due performance of the treaty. The British secured Salsette but restored the territory conquered since the treaty of Purandhar. Raghunath Rao was granted a generous pension by the Poona Government. The Peshwa and the English undertook that their allies should maintain peace with one another. It was provided in the treaty that Haidar was to be obliged to relinquish the territory he had conquered from the English and the Nawab of Arcot. This article was never acted upon and the treaty itself was not ratified at Poona until after the death of Haidar in December 1782. 'The Maratha prime minister (*i.e.* Nana Fadnavis), a man of high degree in statecraft, saw that by holding it in suspense

over the belligerents he could keep in his hands the balance of power between Haidar Ali or Tipu and Hastings.' The treaty gave the British 'peace with the Marathas for twenty years and the possession of Salsette, but the war imposed a heavy financial burden'.

The Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84): The Second Anglo-Mysore war began in July 1780. Though the Nizam and Bhonsle did not co-operate, Haidar succeeded in giving the British, in the words of MacLeod, second in command at Madras, 'a damned rap over the knuckles'. He entered the Carnatic with an army of about 90,000. The Madras Government was unprepared and in the opening stages of the campaign its Commander-in-chief, Sir Hector Munro, the well-known hero of Buxar, showed the greatest indecision, amounting almost to imbecility. Haidar created a circle of desolation around Madras, its lines of communications, and round Vellore. It was not wanton and indiscriminate destruction but a war measure. With certain exceptions due to the exigencies of the military situation, the country he conquered below the *ghats* was as well protected as possible. Assisted by his son Tipu, he overwhelmed at Pollilore a detachment of about 4,000 under Baillie that was marching from Guntur to Conjeveram to join Munro. Munro fidgeted in indecision within the hearing of the guns and after this disaster withdrew as precipitately as he could to Madras.

When Warren Hastings heard of this state of things he made a supreme effort. He sent Sir Eyre Coote, with reinforcements in men and money, to lead the campaign against Haidar Ali. A French fleet under D'Orves appeared on the Madras coast. When Sir Eyre Coote arrived with his army at Cuddalore from Madras, the French fleet put a stop to his supplies coming by the sea. Haidar with his army cut off his communications by land. Coote's position at Cuddalore resembled that of Cornwallis at Yorktown, but for some inexplicable reason D'Orves sailed away and Coote could now secure provisions from Madras by sea. On account of the incapacity of the French admiral, Haidar missed the greatest opportunity of his career. The Cuddalore escapade of Coote must be regarded as one of the greatest events in Indo-British history.

After this Coote gained three victories over Haidar in succession —Porto Novo (1 July 1781), second battle of Pollilore (27 August 1781), Sholinghur (27 September 1781). But these British victories did not lead to much. Haidar merely lost the ground on which he stood. With his swift cavalry he commanded the communica-

tions, and the British were not able to move into the interior from the sea-coast because they could not get sufficient supplies. Early in 1782 a powerful French squadron appeared in the Indian Ocean under the brilliant Admiral de Suffrein. Five indecisive actions were fought between him and the British admiral Sir Edward Hughes. But as a consequence of these engagements superiority rested with the French. According to the French plan, Bussy, the old French leader of the days of Dupleix and Lally, was to land with an army and co-operate with Haidar, but he did not land until after Haidar's death. Either by bad management or bad fortune Frence never had in India an able general or an able admiral at the right moment. Suffrein arrived off Pondichery a year too late, while at the summit of Haidar's fortune the indolent or cowardly D'Orves robbed Haidar of an otherwise certain triumph.

In his campaign of 1782 Haidar had only one major victory to boast of: Tipu surrounded a detachment of 2,000 under Braithwaite at Tanjore and compelled their surrender. Haidar died in December 1782. The war continued even after his death. But peace was concluded between England and France in June 1783. A British attempt to take Bidnur failed disastrously. Tipu besieged Mangalore which the British had occupied. A British army under Colonel Fullarton occupied Coimbatore in November 1783. Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras, became impatient to conclude a treaty and Tipu agreed. The treaty of Mangalore (March 1784) concluded the war on the basis of the mutual restitution of conquests and liberation of prisoners of war. Hastings did not like the terms of this treaty.

Achievement of Hastings: In connection with the First Anglo-Maratha and the Second Anglo-Mysore Wars Warren Hastings made the following claim: 'I had no more concern in the origin and commencement of the Maratha war than the Lord Advocate of Scotland. ... I have been the instrument of saving one Presidency from infamy and both from annihilation.' Considering the part he played in saving the Bombay and Madras Presidencies the claim must be regarded as modest.

CHAPTER THIRTY

GROWTH OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION (1772-1793)

WARREN HASTINGS

End of Double Government: Warren Hastings became Governor of Bengal in April 1772, and Governor-General in October 1774. Sir Alfred Lyall says that he 'showed a genius for pioneering administration'. The Company decided to abandon the dual system of internal government. As Governor Hastings had not the least difficulty in managing his Council of 12 or 13 members; he succeeded in establishing his personal ascendancy. He sought to bring freedom into the markets of Bengal. He totally abolished the use of the *Dustuck* or free pass which exempted the Company's servants or agents from government dues and of which such fraudulent use was made. As the Company was now the Government there was no difficulty in enforcing this. He also suppressed the zamindari *chokeys* or customs houses. Only five central customs houses were henceforth to be maintained at Calcutta, Hooghly, Murshidabad, Patna and Dacca. Customs duties were lowered to a fixed rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on all goods except the monopolies of salt, betelnut and tobacco, and this duty was to be paid by all alike. Warren Hastings carried out this reform which was long overdue at the instance of the Court of Directors.

The Company's decision to 'stand forth as the *Dewan*' involved the abolition of the offices of *Naib Dewan* of Bengal and Bihar. Reza Khan and Shitab Rai were not only dismissed but prosecuted for peculation in accordance with the instructions of the Court of Directors, but they were honourably acquitted. Hastings reduced the Nawab's pension which had already been brought down from 32 *lakhs* to 16 *lakhs*.

Revenue System of Hastings: Hastings had, however, the greatest difficulty in devising a simple system of land revenue administration; he failed in this task. The existing system has been described as an 'impenetrable labyrinth of which the key was sought in vain'. Clive had retained the old organisation. Warren Hastings sought to create his own machinery for assessment and collection. The zamindars of Bengal were even in the days of Akbar 'rich, powerful and numerous'. In the early years of the eighteenth century, when Murshid Quli Khan was the *Dewan* and *Nizam* of Bengal, the hereditary

character of the zamindars' connection with the land was recognised, though that masterful ruler has left behind him a tradition as a chastiser of zamindars. Besides the zamindar, another existing revenue agency was the *Kanungo*, who was the registrar of a district, the custodian of its records.

Hastings did not co-operate with these existing agencies. He appointed a Committee of Circuit to tour through various districts. It was decided to farm the revenue for five years to the highest bidders in order to ascertain the true value of the land. The result was naturally disastrous; the country, already ruined by the famine of 1770, fell into the hands of speculators who rack-rented and absconded. The opinion gained ground that it would be far better to deal with the zamindars who were men of substance and character and could be depended upon. The President and Council formed a Committee of Revenue and revenue administration was placed directly under their control. The *Khalsa* (or the treasury office) was removed from Murshidabad to Calcutta. In each district the Supervisor (under the name of Collector), assisted by an Indian *Dewan*, was made responsible for revenue administration.

In 1772 the Court of Directors sent orders to recall the Collectors and to adopt other measures for the collection of revenue. A Committee of Revenue was set up at Calcutta consisting of two members of the Council and three senior servants below the Council to supervise the work in the districts. They were to be assisted by the *Ray Rayan*, an Indian official who was supervising the work of the Indian *Dewans*. Occasional inspectors could be sent. The three provinces were temporarily to be divided into six divisions, each under a Provincial Council, each consisting of a chief and four senior servants of the Company. Each district was to be under an Indian *Dewan*, the Collector being withdrawn.

Judicial System of Hastings: The Governorship of Warren Hastings marks the beginning of an administrative service separated from the commercial organisation. The greatest achievement of Warren Hastings as Governor was the creation of judicial courts. From Mughal times there was a close connection between land revenue and civil justice. In accordance with the recommendations of the Committee of Circuit, two courts were established in each district—the *Mufassil Dewani Adalat* over which the Collector presided, and the *Faujdari Adalat* (or the court of criminal justice) where the *Qazi* or the *Mufti* expounded the law and inflicted punishment and the

Collector attended with a view to regulating the proceedings. At the Presidency of Fort William superior courts were established—the *Sadar Dewani Adalat* to deal with appeals from the *Mufassil Dewani Adalats*, and the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* to deal with appeals from the *Faujdari Adalats*. Over the *Sadar Dewani Adalat* the President with two members of the Council presided; over the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* a chief officer of justice appointed by the *Nazim* presided. Supervision was also exercised over criminal justice so that the Company's administration in the character of the King's *Dewan* might be satisfied.

The tendency of Warren Hastings to centralize is clearly visible. 'In transferring from Murshidabad to Calcutta the seat of the supreme courts of justice, the head seat of revenue administration and the *Khalsa*, Hastings was instituting a policy deliberately designed to make the last named place the capital of British Bengal.' 'Under the plea that they were acting within the constitution of the Mughal Empire, the Company's servants built up a system of internal government and when the walls of their government had reached a certain height, the sun of the British crown rose to its meridian and the shadow cast by the setting constellation of the Mughal Empire disappeared for ever.'

Hastings and His Council: After the passing of the *Regulating Act* Warren Hastings as Governor-General was, during the period 1774-76, constantly outvoted in his small Council by Francis, Clavering and Monson. In 1776 Monson died and Hastings held the mastery by his casting vote. Clavering died in August 1777, and Hastings's control over the Council was thereby greatly strengthened. On the whole he retained his mastery until his departure from India in 1785. One of the consequences of his quarrel with the Council was the creation of a spirit of partisanship throughout the entire service, but the new Council also brought a new spirit of enquiry. Sir Philip Francis showed a remarkable grasp of the revenue problem and in his minutes advocated a fixed settlement with the zamindars. The idea might have been suggested by some district officers but Francis must be described as 'the original promoter of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal'.

Development of Hastings's Revenue Policy: Hastings gradually came to favour settlement for a life or two joint lives: He appointed a Commission in 1776 known as the *Amini* Commission; it collected valuable data. But the Directors' policy of marking time in view of conflicting data was responsible for annual settlements. Warren

Hastings, master of his Council, was, however, responsible for carrying to completion his favourite policy of centralisation. The Provincial Councils were dissolved and their powers were transferred to the Committee of Revenue. The Collectors were re-appointed but were denied any interference with the new settlement of revenue. 'It was hoped that a central authority aloof from the corruption of the country would be able almost unaided to control an unknown and antiquated system.' As Sir John Shore put it in 1782, 'the real state of the districts is now less known and the revenue less understood than in 1774'. Warren Hastings thus failed to devise a system of land revenue administration that could be regarded as workable.

Beginnings of Civil Service: Another limitation should also be noted so far as the growth of British administration was concerned. Hastings laid the foundations of a civil service, distinct from commerce, but he could not create very healthy traditions for it as he made many improper appointments to gratify persons in power. This demoralised his system. He secured the support of the Archbishop of York by giving the control of Banaras to his son aged 21, and of Sullivan, Chairman of the Court of Directors, by granting the opium contract to his son who sold it for £40,000. It should not be forgotten that he was the principal servant of a chartered commercial Company, not a senatorial Proconsul like Cornwallis and Wellesley, and in his shaky position he had to compromise to a large extent with evil. But there is one redeeming feature. He had not the distrust of Indian agency that characterised the administrative system of Lord Cornwallis who built on the foundations laid by him.

Impeachment of Hastings (1788-1795) : An estimate of the achievements of Warren Hastings as an administrator raises certain controversial issues. On his return to England he was impeached by the House of Commons before the House of Lords on some grave charges—his treatment of Chait Singh and the Begums of Oudh, his fraudulent contracts, as also the presents and bribes which he took. He was sought to be impeached for the Rohilla War, but the Commons did not sanction the inclusion of this among the articles of impeachment.

Case of Nanda Kumar (1775): Suspicion also attaches to him in connection with the Nanda Kumar case. The facts of this case are well known. Nanda Kumar, an influential Brahmin who had held important posts under the Nawabs, accused Warren Hastings in the Council of taking a heavy bribe for nominating Moni Begam, the widow of Mir Jafar, as the guardian of the new Nawab. Hastings had

taken a sum of 150,000 rupees as his allowance during his stay at Murshidabad. Therefore, there was some substratum of truth in the charge of Nanda Kumar. While this was being enquired into, Nanda Kumar was committed for trial on a charge of forgery brought against him by a banker's agent; he was found guilty by the Supreme Court and put to death, as it was generally believed, nominally for forgery but really for accusing the Governor-General. Collusion between the Governor-General and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court cannot be proved. But, in the words of Sir Alfred Lyall, Impey, the Chief Justice, was always inclined to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Hastings and later even gave 'legal countenance to raids upon the Begums' money bags'. It was a fit case for reprieve as the Act under which Nanda Kumar was condemned was of doubtful application to India, and the idea of forgery as a capital offence was opposed to the customs and manners of the country. No Indian after Nanda Kumar was executed for forgery and later, in 1802, the Judges of the Supreme Court expressly admitted that the crime was not capital. The condemned man was also the accuser of the Governor-General. The Chief Justice had the power of reprieve which he did not exercise, and there is also evidence to prove that one of the dependents of Warren Hastings attempted to prevent Farrer, Nanda Kumar's counsel, from presenting a petition for reprieve.

The forged jewels bond was actually forged by one Padma Mohan, an agent of Bolaki Das, who had been Mir Qasim's banker, in the interest of the banker's family. Padma Mohan died some years after Bolaki Das. The banker had, in his will, left much of his money as charitable bequests. The family thus deprived, approached Maharaja for help through Padma Mohan. He agreed to help the family. The charge against him was that he published a false document knowing it to be false.

Case of Chait Singh (1778-1781) : Hastings's treatment of Chait Singh, Raja of Banaras, has been described as 'merciless and vindictive'. He wanted money for the wars against France and the Marathas. The Raja of Banaras had great wealth. He had also incurred the resentment of Warren Hastings. In 1777, when there was a dispute on the question as to whether Warren Hastings had resigned, the Raja had sent an agent to Clavering who had set himself up as a rival Governor-General. The Supreme Court decided in favour of Warren Hastings, who perhaps never forgave the Raja for trying to make terms with his rival. When the Maratha war and the outbreak

of hostilities with France compelled the Governor-General to seek expedients to replenish his treasury, he decided to ask the Raja to pay an extraordinary war subsidy of 5 *lakhs*, which was paid (1778). In 1779 the demand was renewed and payment was made after some delay. In 1780 the Governor-General asked him to furnish a contingent of 2,000 cavalry. He protested and the demand was reduced to 1,000 cavalry. He got together 500 horse and 500 infantry and informed Hastings who had, however, by now made up his mind to impose on him the extraordinary fine of 50 *lakhs*. Hastings wrote, 'I was resolved to draw from his guilt the means of relief to the Company's distress.' He also decided to remove the Raja in case of non-compliance and came to Banaras. The Raja's answers were deemed equivocal and he was ordered to be put under arrest. His troops resented this, suddenly rose, and massacred a company of sepoys and their officers. Hastings had to fly to Chunar. British troops arrived. Chait Singh escaped to Gwalior. His territory was sequestered and conferred upon a nephew, the tribute being almost doubled. The Company got nothing out of this affair, the soldiers keeping what they seized as prize money. The heavy increase of tribute was responsible for the rack-renting of the Banaras district which did not recover until the heavy financial imposition was reduced.

The question whether Chait Singh was an almost independent Raja or a 'mere zamindar' has been argued at length. Even if he was a mere zamindar it is curious to find that no other zamindar was called upon to meet such extraordinary demands and there was no general tax levied on all zamindars. The insurrection was precipitated by the imprudence of Hastings. We would not be wrong in concluding that Hastings deserved severe censure in view of 'impolitic severity and precipitation' about his proceedings against Chait Singh.

Case of the Begams of Oudh (1782): Hastings failed to get any money from Banaras and turned to Oudh. The state of things in Madras and Bombay necessitated an immediate supply of money. Nawab Asaf-ud-daula of Oudh, son and successor of Shuja-ud-daula, was in debt to the Company. He declared his inability to pay unless his mother and grandmother, who were in possession of a very considerable portion of the treasure of the late Nawab, were made to pay. But the Company had in 1775 guaranteed those Begams of Oudh in possession of their treasure and estates. Hastings withdrew this guarantee, and when the Nawab began to hang back he was goaded by the British authorities. The Resident, Middleton, was not

sufficiently energetic in applying coercion and was replaced by Bristow. The Begams' ministers were kept in prison for many months and were for some time even put in irons and deprived of food. The eunuchs were kept in confinement. The treasure of the Begams was seized in December 1782.

Hastings alleged that the Begams had supported the rising of Chait Singh. Impey took affidavits to support the Governor-General. The evidence is not, however, convincing and as Roberts says, 'it was a sordid, shabby and sorry business'. It should be noted in this connection that, as Chait Singh made a present of Rs 20,000 to Hastings to escape from his demands, so the Nawab of Oudh offered him ten *lakhs* as a bribe to release him from his task of coercing these old relatives. Hastings took this bribe, employed the money in the Company's service and persisted in his course of action. Well might the accusers of Hastings describe these as 'the donations of misery to power, the gifts of wretchedness to the oppressors'. These 'sinister fiscal operations' of Warren Hastings must be regarded as unworthy and indefensible. His only argument was the state of public emergency.

Result of Impeachment: The impeachment of Hastings was a long trial and though he was acquitted on all the counts the highest number of votes was recorded against him on the cases of Chait Singh and the Begams. The Whig party made this occasion 'a manifesto for their humanitarian sentiments and an exercise in vituperation'. An enquiry was certainly necessary in order that 'the unhappy features of his period of office should not be allowed to become precedents for British policy in the East', but the long drawn agony of a trial that left him financially broken must be regarded as an act of British ingratitude. Warren Hastings's case is best put in his own words: 'I received the government of Bengal with incumbrances,...I gave it both form and system. The valour of others acquired, I enlarged and gave shape and consistency to the dominion you hold there; I preserved it. I sent forth its armies with an effective but economical hand, through unknown and hostile regions, to the support of your other possessions, to the retrieval of one from degradation and dishonour and the other from utter loss and subjection. ...I gave you all and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace and a life of impeachment.'

Hastings as a Patron of Learning: From the Indian point of view the most remarkable achievement of Warren Hastings was his patronage

of literature, scholarship and the arts—'Nathaniel Halhed and Sir Charles Wilkins as pioneers, Sir William Jones and Henry Thomas Colebrooke as scholars and Hastings as their enthusiastic patron'.

The Regulating Act, 1773: The intervention of Parliament with definite authority in Indian affairs was inevitable after 1757. The East India Company's financial embarrassments precipitated this intervention in 1773. The Regulating Act of 1773, passed at the instance of Lord North, was the first of the long series of Parliamentary enactments relating to India. The constitution of the Company in England was changed, but more important was the change of the structure of the Government of India.

In England the power of vote in the Court of Proprietors was restricted and it was provided that the Directors would be elected for four years. The number of Directors was twenty-four, of whom one-fourth would retire every year. The Directors were required to 'lay before the Treasury all correspondence from India dealing with the revenues; and before a Secretary of State everything dealing with civil or military administration'. Thus for the first time the British Cabinet was given the right of controlling Indian affairs, although the right was imperfect.

As regards the government of India the Act laid down that there was to be a Governor-General of Bengal who was to be assisted by four Councillors.* They were all appointed by name for five years and could be removed earlier only by the King on the recommendation of the Court of Directors. Future appointments were to be made by the Company. The vote of the mojority was to bind the whole body, the Governor-General having only a casting vote in case of an equal division. The Governor-General in Council were vested with the civil and military government of the Presidency of Fort William. They were also to manage and govern the territorial acquisitions and revenues in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as they were exercised by the President and Council or Select Committee. They were to superintend the subordinate Presidencies of Madras and Bombay in the making of war and in the conclusion of peace. But in case of imminent necessity or on the receipt of special orders from the Home Government the subordinate Presidencies might act otherwise. The Act also provided for the establishment of a Supreme Court of Justice by a Royal Charter, which would consist of a Chief Justice (Sir Elijah Impey)

* Clavering, Monson, Barwell, Philip Francis.

and three puisne Judges. Liberal salaries were granted to the Governor-General, Councillors and Judges.

Defects of the Regulating Act: Ilbert writes: 'The provisions of the Act of 1773 are obscure and defective as to the nature and extent of the authority exercised by the Governor-General and his Council, as to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and as to the relation between the Bengal Government and the Court.' It was very unfortunate that the Governor-General was not given the power to override his Council in the last resort. Hastings argued in vain in favour of this right which was not conceded until 1778. Sir John Strachey describes this plan of governing an empire by a constantly shifting majority at Council board as 'impossible' and 'folly'.

Secondly, Calcutta's power to control the subordinate Presidencies was a mere negative power and nothing more. They were so long independent and the exceptions noted in the Act provided them with a disastrous latitude. Bombay's dealings with the Poona *Darbar* during the First Anglo-Maratha War and the relations of Madras with the Nizam and Haidar Ali during the Second Anglo-Mysore War showed that the Act did not certainly help the development of a tradition of loyalty to the Supreme Government.

Thirdly, the Supreme Court was given jurisdiction over British subjects in India, but the term 'British subject' was not explained. The Act avoided a declaration on the question of sovereignty and this mistake was not rectified until the Charter Act of 1813. It brought into existence a Court of King's Judges and professional men of the law but it did not define the field of jurisdiction, the law that was to be administered and the relations between the Council and the Court. A violent quarrel between the Executive and the Judiciary thus developed. The Judges felt that they were entrusted with the task of dealing with oppression by the Executive Government; but there is no doubt that the government of the country was seriously disturbed because the Supreme Court intervened in matters belonging to the *Dewani* and the *Nizamat*. In the Kasijora case the Supreme Court claimed that a zamindar must be held subject to its jurisdiction in a case of a claim for a private debt. In the Patna case the Court asserted authority to penalise the judicial action of officers of the Company. All this made for confusion. Warren Hastings sought a way out of the difficulty by obtaining Impey's acceptance of the Presidency of the *Sadar Dewani Adalat*. Impey was granted a large salary for this additional work of supervising the *Dewani* Courts. Macaulay calls the

offer a bribe and describes the Chief Justice as 'rich, quiet and infamous'. It was felt by many that the Chief Justice compromised the independence of the Supreme Court by taking this salary. In 1782 under instructions from the Court of Directors the Governor-General and Council resumed the *Sadar Dewani Adalat* jurisdiction which had been assigned to the Chief Justice in 1780.

Act of 1781: An amending act was passed in 1781 which effected important changes in the system of 1773. It laid down that the Governor-General and Council were not to be jointly and severally subject to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court was not to exercise any jurisdiction in matters concerning the revenue. The extent of its general jurisdiction was also precisely defined. The Courts dependent on the country constitution were also recognised. The two systems were to remain side by side until a final fusion took place in 1861.

Pitt's India Act (1784): The Regulating Act was in operation for eleven years until it was superseded by Pitt's India Act in 1784. The Act of 1784 concerned itself mainly with the Company's Home Government in London. It established a Board of Commissioners to supervise the civil and military government of the Company, popularly known as the Board of Control, which was to consist of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a Secretary of State and four Privy Councillors appointed by the King. Its secret orders were to be transmitted to India by a Secret Committee of three Directors. The Court of Proprietors could not annul or suspend a joint decision of the Board and these Directors. The Governor-General was to have three Councillors, one of whom was to be the Commander-in-Chief. The subordinate Presidencies were to be definitely subject to Bengal on all questions of diplomacy, war and revenue. By a supplementary Act passed in 1786 the Governor-General was authorised in special cases to override his Council and also to hold the office of Commander-in-Chief.

The Act of 1784 was a very skilful enactment bearing all the marks of a political compromise. The Board of Control had no independent executive power. It had no patronage; its power was veiled. But it had access to all the Company's papers and its approval was necessary for all despatches that were not purely commercial, and in case of emergency the Board could send its own draft to the Secret Committee of the Directors to be signed and sent out in its name. The Act thus placed the civil and military government of the Company in

due subordination to the Government in England. The Court of Directors remained satisfied because they retained their patronage and their right of dismissing their servants. Mill says, 'Of the power which the Directors retain much is inseparable from the management of detail.' It is also relevant to note that 'the Board of Control passed into oblivion as such'. Dundas succeeded in eliminating the other members; the management fell in practice to the President who became practically a Secretary of State for India, Indian affairs thus becoming a matter for the British Cabinet. Pitt's India Act thus settled the main lines of the Company's Home and Indian government for more than seventy years. It also laid down that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour and policy of this nation'—a declaration more honoured in breach than in observance in India.

LORD CORNWALLIS

Advantages of Cornwallis: After the resignation of Warren Hastings the post of Governor-General was held temporarily for more than a year (1785-86) by Sir John Macpherson, who was succeeded by Lord Cornwallis in September 1786. Cornwallis was the first senatorial Proconsul. He has been described as 'the right kind of aristocrat'. He was the personal friend of Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control, and of Pitt, the Prime Minister. He had the most enthusiastic support of the Court of Directors. According to the Act of 1786 he could overrule his Council. He exercised effective control over Madras and Bombay. He was also invested with military control as Commander-in-Chief. He could determine policy with the full assurance of support from the House of Commons. His position as the first Parliamentary Governor-General was thus very secure and he made very good use of his time. His main task in India was administrative organisation and he had excellent administrators to guide him, who had come into prominence in the days of Warren Hastings—John Shore, James Grant and Jonathan Duncan in the field of revenue and general administration, Charles Grant on the commercial side and Sir William Jones in judicial matters. Cornwallis himself had not perhaps conspicuous abilities, but he had industry, honesty and public spirit.

Commercial Reforms: He first reformed the commercial administration of the Company in Bengal. Provisions for the Company's invest-

ment were made by a Board of Trade of eleven members. It was reduced to five members. Instead of contracts for supply with the Company's own servants the Board was to provide investments by contracts with the merchants. Warren Hastings had tried to deliver the weavers from the oppression of the Company's *gomastas* who practised roguery beyond imagination, exercising a quasi-monopolistic control, but the Court of Directors had prevented any real reform. This oppression, this monopoly and coercion proved destructive for the industry, and regulations had to be laid down to prevent oppression of the primary producer or the Indian or foreign trader. Cornwallis boasted in 1789 that 'the investment is now reasonably and intelligently purchased and delivered to the Government at its real cost'. But the Company's commerce became progressively of less importance and the Company lost its monopoly of trade with India in 1813.

Judicial Reforms: The judicial reforms of Cornwallis concerned civil as also criminal justice and police. By his regulation dated 3 December 1790, he took away from the Nawab his power of administering criminal justice and removed the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* to Calcutta. It was to be presided henceforth by the Governor-General and Council, aided by the Chief *Qazi* and *Muftis*. Four Courts of Circuit were established, each under two British judges aided by *Qazis* and *Muftis*. They were to make tours twice a year throughout the districts. The Collectors in the twenty-three districts were given further magisterial powers. In 1791 Superintendents of Police were created for Calcutta. Small areas were put under *Darogas* who were placed at the head of police stations. They were to be subject to the control of the District Magistrate. It was the beginning of the establishment of a regular police force.

After the introduction of the Permanent Settlement Cornwallis finally separated civil jurisdiction from revenue administration. He took away the purely judicial powers of the collectors even in matters of revenue and vested them in the civil judge. Revenue courts disappeared and revenue cases were referred to district courts, now reorganised as three city courts and twenty-three *zilla* courts, each presided over by an English judge. Four Provincial Courts of Appeal at Calcutta, Patna, Dacca and Murshidabad intervened between the district court and the *Sadar Dewani Adalat*. To the *Sadar Dewani Adalat*, consisting of the Governor-General and Council, appeal could be made in larger cases, with a further appeal to the King in

Council in still larger cases. Over the Provincial Courts were three English judges who were also to preside over the Criminal Courts of Circuit at those towns. The Collectors of revenue and all the officers of the Government were made amenable to these courts for acts done in their official capacity. For very minor cases up to 50 rupees Indian *Munsifs* and *Sadar Amins* were given jurisdiction, and Registrars of the courts dealt with cases up to 200 rupees subject to appeal.

In this connection it is only fair to note that Warren Hastings had already brought *Faujdari* or criminal jurisdiction under the control of British officers. He had already begun the separation of revenue work from judicial work. He had already provided for the 'addition of new courts of justice distributed at equal distance throughout the provinces'. Cornwallis thus developed and completed a scheme of reform which in its main features had been initiated by Hastings. The judicial system of Cornwallis was concerned mainly with procedure and it was some time before a good system of laws came and reasonably speedy justice could be ensured.

Permanent Settlement: One of the most important contributions of Cornwallis was in the field of land revenue. In the days of Hastings the view had come to the forefront that revenue should be fixed once for all with the zamindars. Sir Philip Francis made this idea popular in England. It would ensure a uniform and simple title in place of the complex conditions and uncertainty that then prevailed. Cornwallis was not the originator of the *Permanent Settlement* in any way. His instructions required him to make a settlement with the zamindars immediately for a period of ten years. Cornwallis differed from his expert, Sir John Shore, in his conclusion that the data collected in connection with the settlement of 1790 could be regarded as sufficient to justify the Company in making the settlement permanent. His view was accepted in Engalnd and the *Permanent Settlement* of Bengal came formally into existence in 1793.

Hunter has pointed to the imperfections in form and also the fundamental errors that vitiated the settlement. The areas of the zamindari estates were unknown, the areas of rent-free grants and maintenance lands were unascertained, the areas of pasture lands and waste lands remained unascertained, when the settlement was declared permanent. This led to endless confusion and opened the flood-gates of litigation. These defects were, however, capable of amendment. But the rigour of the sale law was disastrous in its immediate consequences. 'It was vain to expect the ancient Rajas

of Bengal, encumbered with all the costly paraphernalia of petty courts and military retainers, to suddenly transform themselves into punctual tax-collectors. The ancient houses of Bengal broke down under the strain. Within 22 years from 1/3 to 1/2 of the landed property of Bengal was actually sold on this account.' It was found that the only escape for the ancient houses was to lease the land to middlemen. Sub-infeudation, though opposed to the purposes of the Permanent Settlement, had to be recognised as one of its essential features.

The authors of the Permanent Settlement were aware of the necessity of 'securing to the tenants the same certainty as to the amount of their rents and the same undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of their industry' as the zamindars were allowed, but the flood of new business made it impossible to undertake the minute investigation necessary for the declaratory leases. The cultivators were vaguely apprehensive and were not willing to execute their counterpart agreement. Moveover, the twenty years following 1770 were a period of falling rents on account of the loss of population; but about twenty years after the introduction of the Permanent Settlement we find that the tenants were competing for holdings and this state of things meant an unearned increment to the zamindars. The haste after fixity was a blunder. A saving factor was the 'easy going, indolent and not altogether self-centred life of the zamindars'. 'The landlords and tenants worked a *modus vivendi* from a legislative blunder.' But increasing population, rising rents, lower and lower standards of living for people employed in agriculture, were new features of agrarian economy. The rural population became progressively poorer. The welfare clauses of the settlement of 1793 remained ineffective for more than half a century. There was no speedy and equitable justice. But the government persisted for many years in regarding this permanent system as sacrosanct.

Civil Service: Cornwallis created new traditions for the Company's Civil Service. He insisted on 'strict discipline and the maintenance in India of the ethical standards which had *now* won acceptance in England'. His panacea for the existing venality and corruption was high salary, strict supervision and Europeanisation. Up to 1781 the administrative personnel was mixed. In 1781 European Collectors were re-appointed. Sir John Macpherson began Europeanisation of the civil establishment on a very wide scale. Lord Cornwallis adopted this principle of Anglicising the personnel of public administration

with a thoroughness that marks a new departure. The testimony of Cornwallis himself, as also that of Shore, is there to prove that the European servants of the East India Company were no less corrupt than the Indian. If the remedies proposed by Cornwallis could cure the evils so far as the Europeans were concerned, they could have also raised the Indians out of the rut. A Collector in 1787, according to the system of Cornwallis, was not to receive Rs 1,200 a month, which was considered indequate, but was to be paid Rs 1,500 and he was to have in addition a commission on the revenue of about 1 per cent. The commission of the Collector of the district of Burdwan amounted to Rs 27,500 per annum. The principle of exclusion of Indians was confirmed by the Charter Act of 1793, which laid down that 'no office, place or employment, the salary and perquisites whereof shall exceed £ 500 per annum, was to be conferred on anybody for the space of three years who was not a covenanted servant of the Company'. As no Indian could be a covenanted servant of the Company, the exclusion of the Indian Agency was thus placed on a legislative basis.

The consequence of this system from the Indian standpoint is best described in the words of Sir Thomas Munro, who was one of the most gifted servants of the East India Company and rose to be the Governor of Madras. He wrote: 'The natives of the British provinces may without fear pursue their different occupations as traders, *meerasidars* or husbandmen, and enjoy the fruits of their labour in tranquillity but none of them can aspire to anything beyond this mere animal state of thriving in peace. It is from men who either hold or are eligible to public offices that natives take their character. Where no such men exist, there can be no energy in any other class of community. No elevation of character can be expected from men who in the military line cannot attain to any rank above that of Subahdar and in the civil line can hope for nothing beyond some petty judicial or revenue office in which by corrupt means he can make up for his slender salary.' The increasing Europeanisation of the bureaucracy and the diminution of Indian influence set up barriers between the two races and the growing alienation was apparent to the discerning student of contemporary history as early as 1815.

The Charter Act of 1793: When the Regulating Act was passed the Charter of the Company had been extended for twenty years. As the time for its renewal came near an agitation was started in England

in favour of the opening of the Indian trade to private merchants. Lord Cornwallis opposed the abolition of the Company's monopoly on the ground that the opening of the trade would bring to India 'desperate speculators' from England. In 1793 the Charter was renewed for twenty years without any material change. The Company's privileges were not abolished. No important constitutional change was introduced by this statute of consolidation.

Problem of Sovereignty in Bengal: The confusion between *de jure* Mughal sovereignty and *de facto* British imperium in Bengal continued almost throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. Dodwell analyses the Regulating Act of 1773, Pitt's India Act of 1784 and the Charter Act of 1793 and comes to the conclusion that we do not find the claim to British sovereignty fully asserted until 1813. 'But at what moment the sovereignty came into being still remained a riddle.' If we study developments in India instead of those in England we find that the treaties concluded by the East India Company with the successive *Subahdars* of Bengal mark some of the stages in the transfer of sovereignty. These treaties and the regulations giving effect to the transfer of functions enable us to trace the gradual concentration of power and functions in the hands of the East India Company until in the days of Lord Cornwallis British sovereignty in Bengal came fully into being. In 1790 he asked the Naib Nizam to quit. Whatever the Charter Acts might indicate the process of exhausting the Nawab's functions was completed in Bengal by 1790 and between 1790 and 1793 the foreign traders in Bengal as also the people of Bengal were made to feel that nothing was left to the Nawab but an empty title and the privilege of conferring empty titles that made him look all the more ridiculous. After 1793 there were only some vestiges of Mughal sovereignty in Bengal. Coinage continued to be issued in the name of the Mughal Emperor until 1835.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

FALL OF MYSORE AND DECLINE OF THE MARATHAS (1786-1805)

THE THIRD ANGLO-MYSORE WAR

Tipu's War with the Marathas and the Nizam (1786-87): The most important political event of Cornwallis's term of office was the Third Anglo-Mysore War. Tipu had succeeded in bringing the Second Anglo-Mysore War to a successful close by the treaty of Mangalore which Hastings regarded as a 'humiliating pacification' from the British point of view. Hastings had even asserted that he did not disavow or annul it because of the 'confusion which must have resulted to the Company's affairs'. But Tipu was restless and war very soon began between him and the Marathas who were in league with the Nizam. This was the great difference between the father and the son. Haidar had certain rules which made the practice of power politics in his hands relatively safe. He somehow saw to it that his enemies—the Marathas, the Nizam and the British—did not combine against him; he normally fought one enemy at a time and in his last years brought about a combination of all the Indian Powers against the British. Tipu stands in the same relation to Haidar in the matter of foreign policy as did Kaiser Wilhelm II to Bismarck. He violated every one of the rules that governed the foreign policy of his predecessor and thus drove his enemies who were hostile to each other to combine against him. In 1786 he fought against both these powers, and though triumphant in the engagements, he expressed his anxiety to end the war, as he was apprehensive that the British might join the confederates. The terms were more favourable to the Marathas and the Nizam than the state of the campaign warranted.

Origin of the Third Anglo-Mysore War: Tipu's conduct was capricious and he was responsible, in spite of the treaty, for fresh aggressions against the Marathas. The Nizam, apprehensive of the Marathas and distrustful of the British, made approaches to Tipu who, however, wanted a marriage alliance. The Nizam haughtily rejected such a connection and tried to draw closer to the British. Tipu sent envoys to France and received some encouragement; but in the nature of the circumstances he could not hope for any effective support. He also matured his plan of invading Travancore. He cal-

culated that if he succeeded he would invade from the south and by the time the British army could be assembled 'he could commence the war with the Caveri as his northern frontier towards Coromandel, a boundary anxiously and incessantly desired by the rulers of Mysore since 1751'.

Cornwallis considered a rupture with Tipu as a certainty and wanted vigorous co-operation with the Nizam and the Marathas. He was bound by the non-intervention clause of Pitt's India Act, but he was so anxious for an 'intelligible offensive alliance' that he discovered a way out. On July 7, 1789, he wrote a letter to the Nizam in which he agreed to furnish him with a subsidiary force not to be employed against certain powers specifically mentioned; in that enumeration every one was included with the single exception of Tipu. Cornwallis declared that this letter was as binding 'as a treaty in due form could be'. There could hardly be a clearer enunciation of British policy towards Tipu.

Tipu's attack on the celebrated Travancore lines, which had been created as a defensive measure against possible aggression, was launched in December 1789. He was not at first successful. The next attack in April 1790, however, met with success. Travancore was in alliance with the English and Cornwallis now intervened. He concluded a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with the Peshwa and the Nizam in July 1790. Each of these powers was to send a contingent of 10,000 horse to act with the English army. There would be an equal division of conquests, but the territory of particular zamindars and poligars formerly dependent on the Marathas should be restored to them in full sovereignty. The English wanted to retain the conquests made by them before the commencement of war by the other parties.

The Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-92): The war that now began lasted for nearly two years. It fell into three campaigns. In 1790 General Medows marched with an army of 15,000. According to the British plan the principal army was to secure the Coimbatore district and advance to Mysore. Another British army, first under Kelly and then under Maxwell, was to watch the passes leading from Mysore to the Carnatic. A Bombay army was to seize the possessions of Tipu in Malabar. Tipu very nearly overwhelmed the force of Maxwell, but Medows at last succeeded in effecting a junction. Though the British army succeeded as a result of the first year's campaign in occupying Dindigul, Coimbatore and Palghat, the

aspect of affairs was responsible for the decision of Lord Cornwallis to assume the chief command. In 1791 Lord Cornwallis took a new point of attack, moving by Vellore and Ambur to capture Bangalore. After taking it he advanced to Seringapatam; but Tipu's scorched earth policy was largely responsible for a famine in his camp and he had to destroy his battering guns and relinquish the siege. As he fell back his Maratha allies, who had taken Dharwar in the north and were hastening to join him, brought for him ample supplies that relieved his famished camp. The next campaign was more favourable to British arms. Cornwallis succeeded in drawing his lines around Seringapatam, took possession of the outworks of Tipu's capital and compelled Tipu to sue for peace.

Results of the War: By the treaty of Seringapatam (March 1792) Tipu had to agree to surrender half of his territory. The Maratha share lay principally between the Wardha and the Krishna, including also the valley of Sundur near Bellary. The Nizam got the districts extending from the Krishna to beyond the Pennar river, including Gooty and Cuddapah. The English got Dindigul, Baramahal, Coorg and Malabar. Cornwallis justified these territorial acquisitions to the authorities in England as best calculated to secure 'a strong defensive frontier'.

This settlement Cornwallis regarded as final. His triple alliance was the basis of his policy. At the end of the war he perhaps wanted to make this more specific for the future, but the stipulations of the treaty remained merely defensive and could not operate unless Tipu attacked any of the three parties without any just provocation. The policy of reducing the formidable power of Tipu Sultan proved ineffective and another war was to follow in a few years' time.

SIR JOHN SHORE AND THE POLICY OF NON-INTERVENTION

Justification of Non-Intervention Policy: Sir John Shore, a distinguished civil servant of the Company, succeeded Cornwallis in 1793. He maintained a strict attitude of non-intervention. He has been very much blamed by Imperialists for pursuing this impracticable policy of restraint which led to collapse of British prestige. But it is overlooked that 'at the root of Shore's policy of non-intervention, as of Cornwallis, was the conviction that the East India Company's army was not strong enough to wage a successful war against the five Maratha powers (Peshwa, Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle, Gaikwad) when

united among themselves and actively allied with Tipu Sultan who was searching heaven and earth to secure allies'. There was no competent British general in India. The Sepoys in the British army outnumbered the British troops as six to one or as seven to one, which was not regarded as a safe proportion. The Third Anglo-Mysore War had left a legacy of heavy debt and in 1795 Shore was not financially in a position to support a war. He believed like Cornwallis that if the Marathas were left alone their internal dissensions would lead to the disintegration of their power, whereas any attack by the British on what they considered their just rights or a point of national honour would unite them and would bring about a Maratha-Mysore combination as in the days of Warren Hastings. It is forgotten that in 1795, with Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan living and with Nana Fadnavis presiding over the destinies of the Maratha nation, the state of things was very different from what Wellesley was fortunate enough to find in 1802. It is also overlooked that intervals of peace and retrenchment are necessary even in expansionism. The English conquest of India is said to have been of a pulsatory character. A period of war and conquest was followed by a period of recuperation that lay by reserve for future wars. Shore, Barlow and Minto, with their much abused non-interventionism, played a part that was necessary for the success of the frenzy of conquest which characterised the policy of Wellseley and Lord Hastings.

Nana Fadnavis: The two outstanding personalities who dominated Maratha affairs at the time when Sir John Shore became Governor-General were Nana Fadnavis and Mahadji Sindhia. Nana Fadnavis, who made the young Peshwa, Madhav Rao Narayan, a mere puppet in his hands, has been described by his European contemporaries as the Maratha Machiavelli. Grant Duff says: 'The extent of his influence and the combination of instruments which he called into action surprised all India.' Though he was very much inimical to Tipu he was also very much opposed to the total overthrow of Mysore.

Mahadji Sindhia: Mahadji Sindhia dominated affairs in the north. He had his districts in Malwa. He became the Regent of Delhi in 1784 and took over control of the puppet Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II. In 1787-88 he was placed in a very critical position by a combination of his enemies in the north against him. He suffered a defeat in the battle of Tunga (near Jaipur) and Ghulam Qadir, the Rohilla chief, and his associate Ismail Beg secured Delhi; but Mahadji succeeded in defeating and killing both Ghulam Qadir and Ismail Beg. Sindhia

had to a large extent abandoned the traditional Maratha method of warfare; he relied upon regular troops, who were trained and led by Frenchmen in his service, of whom the most prominent was De Boigne. Mahadji Sindhia was opposed to the entire conquest of Tipu's territory in 1792. The English were suspicious of him and there is ample evidence of their watchful jealousy. He has been described by Grant Duff as 'a man of great political sagacity and of considerable genius, of deep artifice, of restless ambition and of implacable revenge'. He died suddenly in 1794 and was succeeded by his grand-nephew Daulat Rao Sindhia. Mahadji was in a sense a rival of Nana Fadnavis and his sudden death left Nana all-powerful in Maratha affairs.

The state of Maratha relations with the British in 1794 is best described in the words of the great historian of the Marathas: 'The Nizam saw in the British a disposition to assist him and hoped to realize his meditated scheme of raising a barrier between himself and the Marathas so that he might not only resist their future encroachments but evade their present demands. On the propriety of resisting this interposition both Nana Fadnavis and Mahadji Sindhia concurred; but they differed in their opinions with regard to the supposed designs of the English. Sindhia conjectured that they projected an alliance with Nizam Ali for the purpose of obtaining the command of the Nizam's resources and turning them against the Marathas; in consequences of which, for a short time previous to his death, he carried on a friendly correspondence with Tipu Sultan. Nana Fadnavis took a more correct view of the subject in supposing that the English, desirous of becoming umpires, would not risk a war unless to save the Hyderabad state from being subverted.'

Maratha War against the Nizam (1795): After Mahadji's death the situation rapidly developed. The Marathas had outstanding balances against the Nizam on account of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. For more than a decade discussions on the subject had been going on and the Nizam had been compelled to acknowledge some of these demands. After the war with Tipu, the Nizam wanted to obtain first from Lord Cornwallis and then from Sir John Shore a treaty of guarantee. Sir John Shore would not, however, compel the Marathas to accept British mediation in their dispute with the Nizam and adopted a policy of neutrality. Grant Duff comments: 'Whatever might have been the apparent advantage of the Governor-General's interference, if it had enabled Nizam Ali to effect his evasive purposes it must have

been recorded as an injustice to the Marathas.' The Nizam was raising regular troops and these were trained by a Savoyard officer named Raymond. His prime minister became so full of confidence in his strength that he told Maratha envoys who had come to discuss Maratha claims that Nana Fadnavis should be made to attend at the Court of Hyderabad. He boasted that the Peshwa should be despatched to Banaras 'with a cloth about his loins and a pot of water in his hand, to mutter incantations on the banks of the Ganges'.

The inevitable war was very short. All the Maratha chiefs responded to the call from Poona. The battle of Kharda (March 1795) itself was nothing. The fighting was really contemptible. Scarcely 200 men were slain on the field of battle. The young Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan could not rejoice over the victory and is said to have remarked, 'I grieve to observe such degeneracy as there must be on both sides when such a disgraceful submission has been made by the Mughals and our soliders are vaunting of a victory obtained without an effort.' The Nizam's defeat was, however, complete. He surrendered his boastful minister to make amends for the insult, ceded half his territories and paid a large sum of money. He fell from the state of a great and leading power in India and in his impotent rage increased his battalions that were now trained, disciplined and commanded by French officers. Fortunately for the British cause, the suicide of Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan (in October 1795) shortly after Kharda was followed by a complicated struggle for power that nullified the effects of the Maratha victory over the Nizam and disorganised the Maratha State. The confusion at Poona provided the British not long after with the welcome opportunity of taking advantage of the internal discords of the Marathas to establish their paramount power in India.

Oudh: In Oudh Sir John Shore did not pursue the policy of non-intervention. On the death of Nawab Asaf-ud-daula in 1797 he found two claimants for succession—Sa'adat Ali, the deceased Nawab's brother, and Wazir Ali, whom the late Nawab had looked upon as his successor. Sir John Shore recognised the claim of Sa'adat Ali and compelled him to sign a treaty (1798) by which the subsidy payable by the Nawab was increased and the fort of Allahabad, 'the military key of the province', was annexed to the Company's dominions.

LORD WELLESLEY AND THE POLICY OF SUBSIDIARY ALLIANCE

Imperialism of Lord Wellesley: Lord Wellesley succeeded Sir John Shore in April 1798. 'With the exception of Lord Curzon no Governor-General had come out so well informed concerning all the problems of Indian government as the Marquess of Wellesley was.' He was 'a ripe and accomplished scholar', and as a member of the Board of Control he was in close contact with Indian affairs for several years. He was a strong Imperialist. His object was, to quote his own words, 'to establish a comprehensive system of alliance and political relation over every region of Hindustan and the Deccan'. In other words, he aimed at 'the elevation of the British Government to the position of paramount power in India'. It has been said that his administration was 'but a series of graduated upheavals from chaos to cosmos'. The oft-repeated statement that during his Governor-Generalship the British Empire *in* India became the British Empire *of* India is historically true.

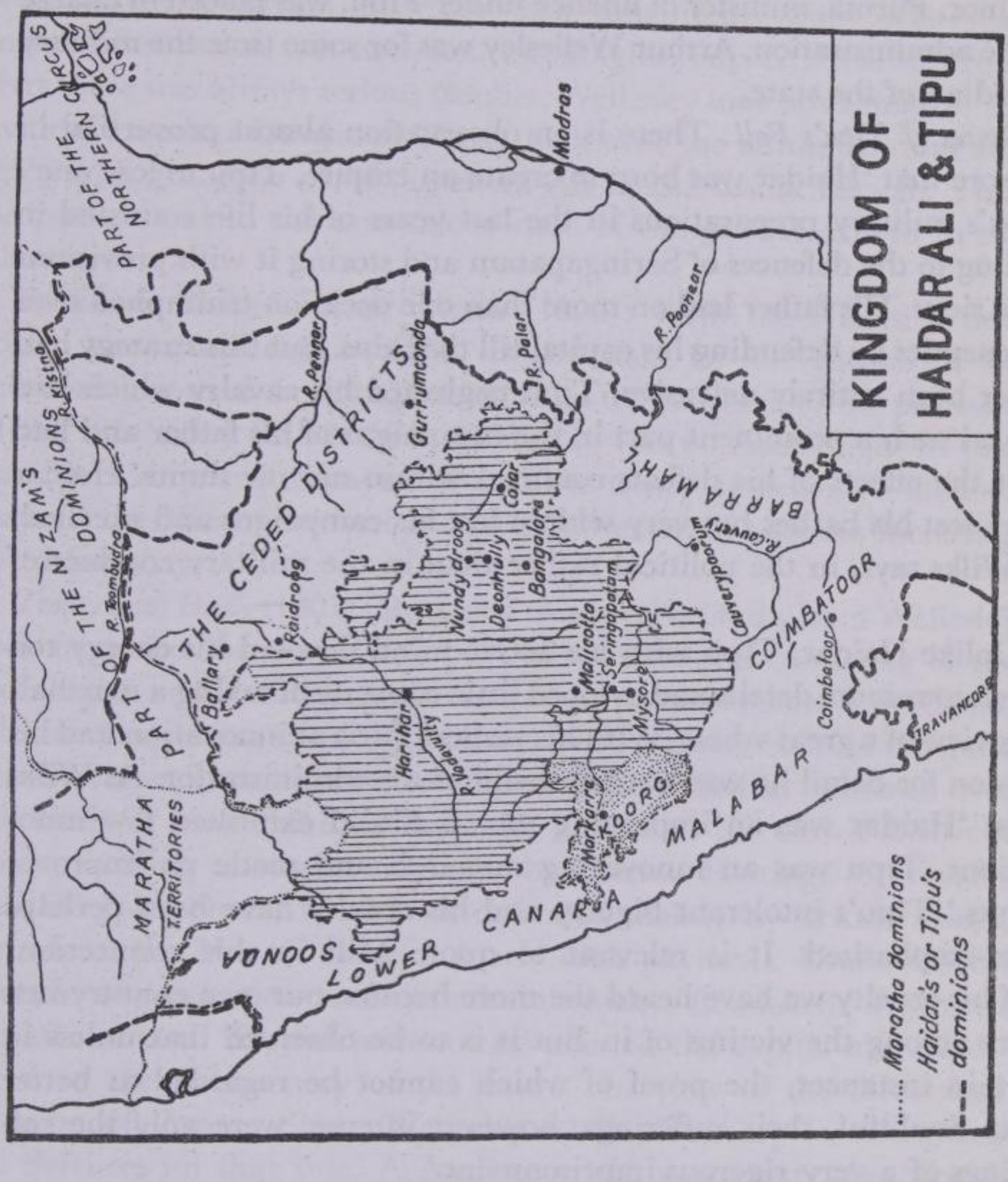
Justification of Wellesley's Mysore Policy: The first important triumph of British policy and British arms that marks the beginning of this great transformation was the overthrow of the power of Mysore. Mill says that there was no reason for destroying Tipu in 1799 which had not existed at every moment since the commencement of the negotiations for the peace of 1792. He adds that the connection between Tipu and the French was trifling and their mode of intercourse childish and absurd. On the other hand Wilson, who has edited Mill's book, draws a very lurid picture in justification of the policy of the Governor-General. Was the British Government to wait till Tipu should be strong, till the negotiations he was publicly carrying on with France should mature, or till he succeeded in securing the effective co-operation of the trained army of 14,000 men that was under the control of Raymond at Hyderabad? 'The same chances that landed a large army in Egypt at this very period, in spite of the superiority and vigilance of the British fleet, might have operated in sending to Tipu Sultan a body of officers and men, by whose aid his resources would have been made powerfully to contribute to the annoyance and perils of British Indian Empire.' Zaman Shah, grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali, was in league with Tipu and was threatening to invade India from the north-west. Lord Wellesley's promptitude and determination is said to have thus saved the situation. In the words of the Governor-General himself,

it was a 'critical, not alarming' state. Wellesley regarded the conquest of Mysore as his greatest triumph and again and again reverted to it 'as Cicero did to the suppression of Catiline's conspiracy'. The peril of French aggression from within and without has been perhaps exaggerated, but there is no denying the fact that the collapse of the power of Mysore strengthened British position in India *vis-a-vis* the Marathas more or less in the same way as the victory of Sadowa strengthened German position as against France, ensuring ultimate triumph.

Subsidiary Alliance with the Nizam (1798): Wellesley made serious attempts at negotiations with Tipu, who not unnaturally regarded them as endeavours to gain time. But negotiations at Hyderabad resulted in the substitution of a British force for a French force at the Nizam's capital. A treaty was concluded in September 1798. The Nizam had proposed to Sir John Shore that he would dismiss the French officers in his service as also the French-trained battalions, provided he got sufficient British support and was assured that he would be defended against the Marathas. Sir John Shore had not agreed. Wellesley was now prepared to give him a subsidiary force that would be 'at all times ready to execute services of importance'. The Nizam agreed to pay a subsidy of Rs 24,17,000 per annum for this force, to expel all European officers of non-British origin, and to conduct his foreign relations according to British advice. The French force was disarmed without bloodshed and the Nizam was thus restored to the British as an ally.

The Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799): Negotiations between the Governor-General and Tipu Sultan ended in August 1798, and both sides were ready for the contest at the beginning of 1799. Wellesley's object in beginning this war was to cut off Tipu's communications with the French by taking Kanara, to exact from him an indemnity and to compel him to receive an English Resident at his capital. The British plan was well-prepared and operations were well-combined. General Harris moved from Vellore, General Stewart from Cannanore. Arthur Wellesley, later famous in history as Duke of Wellington, commanded the Hyderabad contingent. Tipu was out-generalled. The ring was closed around Seringapatam. The siege of Seringapatam began on 17 April and it was captured on 4 May. Tipu was killed, his sons surrendered. Thus ended the rule of the dynasty of Haidar Ali.

The principal and the central parts of the territories of Tipu were


KINGDOM OF
HAIDAR ALI & TIPU
NIZAM'S DOMINIONS
PART OF THE NORTHERN CIRCUS
CEDED DISTRICTS
R. Penner
Gurramconda
R. Palar
Madras
R. Poonear
BARRAMAHL
R. Cauvery
Trichinopoly
COIMBATOOR
Coimbatoor
TRAVANCORE
Raidrog
Ballary
Wundydrog
Deonhully
Bangalore
Colar
Malicotta
Seringapatam
Mysore
Harihar
R. Wurdanilly
Markarra
COORG
MALABAR
CANARA
LOWER
SONDA
MARATHA TERRITORIES
PART OF THE
R. Toombudra
Marratha dominions
Haidar's or Tipu's dominions

given to a descendant of the ancient *Rajas* of Mysore. The East India Company annexed Kanara. The Nizam was given territory lying to the north-east. He later surrendered his share of the conquest to the British when he concluded his second treaty with the Company in 1800. The new state of Mysore thus came to be completely surrounded by British territory and was cut off from the sea. The new *Raja* was a minor. Purnia, minister of finance under Tipu, was placed in charge of the administration. Arthur Wellesley was for some time the military guardian of the state.

Causes of Tipu's Fall: There is an observation almost proverbial in Mysore that 'Haidar was born to create an empire, Tipu to lose one'. Tipu's military preparations in the last years of his life consisted in adding to the defences of Seringapatam and storing it with provisions for a siege. His father had on more than one occasion triumphed over his enemies by defending his capital till the rains. But this strategy had never been entirely defensive. Tipu neglected his cavalry which had played such a prominent part in the campaigns of his father and had kept the effects of his defeats confined within narrow limits. Haidar often lost his battles but very seldom lost his campaigns and excelled, as Wilks says, in the political rather than in the military conduct of war.

Unlike Haidar, Tipu with his active mind devoted his energy too much to minute details and evinced little capacity of taking a marshalling view of a great whole. With his restless spirit at innovation and his passion for detail he was not successful as an administrator. As Wilks says: 'Haidar was an improving monarch and exhibited few innovations. Tipu was an innovating monarch and made no improvements.' Tipu's intolerant bigotry and his cruelty have been perhaps over-emphasised. It is relevant to quote Mill in this connection: 'Of his cruelty we have heard the more because our own countrymen were among the victims of it. But it is to be observed that unless in certain instances, the proof of which cannot be regarded as better than doubtful, their sufferings, however intense, were only the sufferings of a very rigorous imprisonment.'

Annexation of Tanjore and the Carnatic: Lord Wellesley absorbed the principality of Tanjore taking advantage of a disputed succession (1799). The Raja of Tanjore accepted the position of a pensioned nobleman. Wellesley also annexed the Carnatic (1801). The papers found at Seringapatam after Tipu's death are said to have incriminated Umdat-ul-Umra, son and successor of Muhammad Ali

who had died in 1795. The Carnatic was a sink of iniquity. The Company gave protection to Muhammad Ali on condition of a regular monthly payment of a stipulated subsidy and it did not interfere in the internal concerns of his government. He borrowed money of Englishmen, some of them even members of the Madras Council, in order to be able to pay his subsidies regularly. These English creditors were assigned certain districts. The inhabitants were oppressed, maladministration was rampant, but English cupidity was so strong that there was always serious trouble. Wellesley took advantage of the evidence against Umdat-ul-Umra, took over the administration and selected a grandson of Muhammad Ali as the titular Nawab. Thus he put an end to the anomalous state of things that existed in the Carnatic.

Subsidiary Treaty with the Nizam (1800): With the Nizam a new treaty was concluded in 1800. It provided for the cession of his territories south of the Tungabhadra and the Krishna for the payment of the subsidiary British force. Wellesley was no doubt right in preferring this system of payment and the treaty of defensive alliance assured the Nizam protection against all external enemies including the Marathas.

Treaty with Oudh (1801): By a new treaty with Oudh Lord Wellesley took from the Nawab a large part of his territory, consisting of the Gorakhpur and Rohilkhand Divisions and some portions of the Doab. This revised arrangement did not establish a better state of things in Oudh proper, though it led to an extension of British influence over the territory now ceded. These were known as the Ceded Districts. Under existing arrangements made by Warren Hastings, Cornwallis and Sir John Shore, Oudh was defended mainly by British troops, for whom the Nawab made a yearly cash payment. Under British protection corruption and maladministration flourished. Payments fell into arrears. 'English adventurers infested the capital and ministered to the debauchery of the court.' In view of the threatened invasion of Zaman Shah, Wellesley felt it necessary to strengthen the defences on that side. According to the new treaty the Nawab dismissed his 'rabble force' and filled its place by increasing the number of the Company's troops. He made the territorial cessions above referred to in commutation for the subsidy. What the Nawab retained was completely enclosed by British territory, and in these districts he engaged to introduce a better system of administration. Oudh was no longer a buffer State. But it became very soon clear after

this subsidiary treaty, as in the case of others that followed, that the Company made itself responsible for a Government which remained hopelessly incompetent with all the faults of idleness and luxury, disaffection and anarchy.

Criticism of the Policy of Subsidiary Alliance: The treaty with the Nizam (1800) and the Oudh treaty of 1801 show Wellesley's Subsidiary Alliance system in its mature form. Mill gives us an estimate of the evils of dependence on the English: 'The oppressions of the native government were limited by their weakness. When they received the use of English strength their oppressions were limited by nothing. . . .Among the small sovereignties of India, misgovernment produced weakness and weakness invited conquest. The misgovernment, for example, of the Carnatic and Oudh, would infallibly have produced the conquest of the one by Tipu, of the other by the Marathas, and as a prince was commonly strong only because he governed well, to be conquered was among the happiest results which the people knew.' 'The native Prince guaranteed in the possession of his dominions under British protection became a *rois faineant*, the higher classes lost their self-respect and the spirit of indigenous political life departed.' Wellington described the state of the Nizam's country as late as January 10, 1804, as 'chaos itself'. Annexation on the ground of chronic misrule, as in the case of Oudh later, was a natural consequence of Wellesley's system.

Wellesley's justification of his Subsidiary Policy lies in the more general or imperial aspect. Wellington, while fully aware that it sapped the spontaneous energy of the native State, creating a tendency to lawlessness, justified it on that ground. He wrote: 'The consequences have been that in this war with the Marathas, which it is obvious must have occurred sooner or later, the Company's territories have not been invaded and the evils of war have been kept at a distance from the sources of our wealth and power.' The Duke wrote to Canning in 1816 that the Subsidiary System as distinct from looser alliances should not be extended to other powers than the Peshwa and the Nizam. The great defect of the Subsidiary System was that it failed to maintain a certain standard of internal administration. But in Wellesley's time this policy formed the line of least resistance. It strengthened the position of the Company and relieved its finances 'by making the native Princes themselves defray the expenses of the troops by which they were to be overawed'.

Confusion in the Maratha Empire: The great statesman Nana

Fadnavis died in March 1800. 'With him departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government.' The Maratha Confederacy was now leaderless. Baji Rao II, weak, wily and treacherous, had succeeded Madhav Rao Narayan as Peshwa in 1796. The disputes that were going on among the Marathas came to a head. Fate had taken a malicious delight in removing all the great men and women who had played a dominant part in Maratha affairs in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Daulat Rao Sindhia, a lad of fifteen, had inherited the resources of Mahadji, but he was unable to emerge triumphant in the complicated struggle for power that now ensued. Ahalya Bai, daughter-in-law of Malhar Rao Holkar, had died in 1795, having administered Holkar dominions with conspicuous success for about thirty years. Tukoji Holkar, who used to command her army, got the rank and power but died in 1797; after some confusion Jaswant Rao Hoklar, an illegitimate son of Tukoji, seized power. Soon he became a rival of Daulat Rao for ascendancy at Poona. On 25 October 1802, he succeeded in defeating the troops of the Peshwa and Sindhia almost within sight of the city of Poona.

Subsidiary Alliance with the Peshwa (1802): Baji Rao II fled from Poona into the Konkan, arrived at Bassein, and concluded a treaty of Subsidiary Alliance with the British on 31 December 1802. A subsidiary force of not less than 6,000 was to be permanently stationed in the Peshwa's dominions. Districts yielding 26 *lakhs* of rupees were assigned for the payment of this force. The Peshwa submitted to British arbitration in the adjustment of his claims on the Nizam and Gaikwad, who were already under British protection. The British Government was to control his foreign relations. The Peshwa thus 'sacrificed his independence as the price of protection'. He was restored to Poona by British troops in May 1803, and Jaswant Rao Holkar withdrew from Poona to the north.

Sidney Owen says: 'The line which Wellesley pursued in his Maratha negotiations was a bolder and more original one than had ever been adopted or probably conceived by any European statesman in India, Dupleix perhaps excepted.' Wellesley's idea was to treat the Peshwa and other great chiefs of the Maratha Confederacy as separate and independent powers, to break up for ever this political confederacy, and to abolish the vague Maratha claims over Indian Princes. Circumstances helped him. The Peshwa acknowledged British paramount power. The Maratha Confederacy, whether we

regard it as an institution like the Holy Roman Empire or as a mere family compact between the Peshwa and other members, stood practically dissolved. The treaty with the Peshwa completed the diplomatic cordon by which the Nizam was fenced off and the possession of the Peshwa's territory facilitated British control over the military movements of the other Maratha chiefs.

If Wellesley expected that Sindhia would agree to this imposition of British power on the Marathas it merely shows that he was unable to understand his opponents' standpoint. Wellesley perhaps hoped that the divisions and jealousies of the Maratha chiefs would avert war and he would be able to disarm them by degrees and establish the peaceful supremacy of the Company. But, as the thoroughness of British preparation showed, he did not shrink from the issue of a war.

The Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-05): The three great Maratha Chiefs—Raghuji Bhonsle of Berar, Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Holkar—were not inclined to submit tamely to the dissolution of the Maratha Confederacy and the establishment of British paramount power. The Raja of Berar succeeded in patching up a peace between Sindhia and Holkar, but Holkar, instead of immediately joining them against the British, decided to be guided by the issue of events. Sindhia and Bhonsle moved southward. Daulat Rao Sindhia's actions leading to the war were 'marked by folly, indecision and delay'. He hesitated and waited until Lord Wellesley completed his preparations and then, 'like a moth that long buzzes round a candle and at last blindly rushes into the flame', he at last declared war. His regular army was betrayed by its French commanders whom Wellesley had already seduced.

General Arthur Wellesley commanded British operations in Southern India and Lord Lake in the north. General Wellesley captured Ahmadnagar and defeated the combined armies of Sindhia and Bhonsle at Assaye in September 1803. The Governor-General's diplomacy had already contrived that Begum Samru's five battalions would come over to the English as soon as they could. Pohlman, who led one of Sindhia's full brigades at Assaye, had already been won over. Wellington 'with his fiery few did not clash against the myriads at Assaye but only against a small section of the bloated Maratha army; in the actual clash of arms only five battalions of Sindhia stood up against the English'. Raghuji Bhonsle made a cowardly flight. But Sindhia took his revenge by leaving Bhonsle in the lurch in the

next battle at Argoan in November 1803. The Bhonsle Raja was decisively defeated and forced to sign the treaty of Deogaon (December 1803) under which he ceded Cuttack and agreed to accept a position similar to that which Sindhia accepted later.

Meanwhile Lord Lake was operating against Sindhia's possessions in the north. Sindhia's regular army in that region, betrayed by its French commanders, first by Perron at Aligarh, then by his successor Louis Bourquin at Delhi (Patparganj), was easily defeated in both these engagements. Sindhia's remaining regular forces, weakly led by Ambaji Ingle, fought with great stubbornness and bravery at Laswari (November 1803). Most of them fell with their arms in hand. The Jat and Alwar auxiliaries of Lord Lake's army gave the *coup de grace* to Ambaji's force. Sindhia's regular army in the north was thus completely destroyed and Sindhia had to conclude the subsidiary treaty of Surji Anjangaon (December 1803). He ceded to the British his territory between the Jumna and the Ganges and all districts situated north of the Rajput principalities of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Gohad. The forts of Ahmadnagar and Broach, with their districts, and all claims on the Mughal Emperor, the Peshwa, the Nizam and Gaikwad were renounced. By another treaty concluded at Burhanpur in February 1803, Sindhia agreed to receive a subsidiary force to be stationed near his boundary but within British territory.

Grant Duff writes: 'The rapidity of the conquests and the speedy termination of the war surprised all India.' Sir Thomas Munro thus described the causes of this collapse of Maratha military power: 'I thought their cavalry could have shown a little more enterprise, but they ruined it and destroyed its spirit by teaching the troopers that they did not depend upon cavalry but upon infantry. By coming forward with regular infantry they gave us every advantage we could desire. They opposed to us men that could never be as good as our own, from the want of a national spirit among the officers.' He had written earlier about the regular battalions in Maratha service, 'its discipline, its arms, and uniform clothing I regard merely as the means of dressing it out for the sacrifice.'

But the old Maratha predatory system of warfare, of which the Holkar family was a great advocate, now came to have a fair trial in 1804-05. Jaswant Rao was being watched by Lake. After the surrender of Bhonsle and Sindhia he determined to fight on his own account. The British plan of campaign was to press Holkar from all directions; but when Lake went into quarters at Kanpur for the

rainy season, Monson, who was to keep Holkar in check, bungled. His forces were practically overwhelmed in the Mukund Dara Pass in Rajputana, 48 kilometres south of Kotah, in August 1804. With his remnants he reached Agra in utter disorder. It was the greatest humiliation which the British had experienced since the defeat of Baillie. The Raja of Bharatpur was emboldened to renounce alliance with the British and to support Holkar in his attack on Delhi which, however, failed. On 13 November 1804, Holkar's infantry was defeated with heavy loss at the battle of Dig. Lake was responsible for a breathless cavalry chase along the Doab and Holkar's cavalry was routed at Farrukhabad. Holkar's capital Indore was taken by a detachment of the Bombay army, while Holkar was wasting British provinces with fire and sword. Four vehement assaults by Lake's victorious army were, however, repulsed by the Jats at Bharatpur early in 1805. Lake was eventually obliged to make peace with the Raja. Holkar with his fortunes so low took the route to the Punjab, closely pursued by Lord Lake.

Maratha predatory warfare now stood almost as much discredited as the new model army of Sindhia. But as a consequence of the failures of Monson and Lake the authorities in England, who had never really favoured Wellesley's aggressive policy, recalled him and sent Lord Cornwallis back to India. 'The vehement tide of public opinion in England condemned the rash, ambitious and war-loving statesman and floated out the good old nobleman who had first broken Tipu's power.'

Estimate of Wellesley: In spite of the hasty recall of Wellesley and a timid pacification under Cornwallis and Barlow, it cannot be denied that Maratha military prestige was gone, Maratha power was no longer a rival of the British, and the Company was now paramount in India. This was the greatest achievement of Lord Wellesley, the most successful Imperialist in British Indian history.

Smith says: 'Lord Wellesley, like Lords Lytton and Dufferin in later times, looked upon the affairs of India as seen by a British nobleman and politician from a Foreign Office point of view. He was a statesman, rather than an administrator, concerned chiefly with matters of high policy and little inclined to examine closely the details of departmental administration.' But Lord Wellesley was conscious of the importance of a strong and efficient system of administration. He observed: 'The stability of that Empire. . . must be secured by the durable principles of internal order; by a pure, upright, and uniform

administration of justice; by a prudent and temperate system of revenue.' He established the Fort William College for the training of young civilians imported from England. His regime constitutes a landmark in the history of the development of the British Civil Service in India. He was an adept in the art of selecting promising young men for responsible posts. Munro, Malcolm, Metcalfe, Elphinstone—great names in British Indian history—practically began their careers under him, and from him they derived the inspiration which shaped them in their impressionable years. Malcolm says: 'His great mind pervaded the whole; and a portion of his spirit was infused into every agent whom he employed.' If Lord Hastings completed the task of empire-building left unfinished by Lord Wellesley, he found in the civil and military officers trained under the latter able instruments and sagacious advisers.

End of Mughal Sovereignty: Lord Lake entered Delhi after his victory at Patparganj in September 1803. Shah Alam II placed himself under British protection. Lord Wellesley did not sign any treaty or engagement with him. By an order issued on 24 May 1805, permanent provision was made for the support of the Emperor. Even in the territory reserved for this purpose outside the Red Fort the administration was conducted by the British Resident. The Padishah did not even exercise internal sovereignty like the vassal princes accepting British suzerainty. He was certainly no longer the suzerain of the East India Company. He was not an ally of the King of England. The Treaty of Surji Anjanjaon (December 1803) 'marks the true end of the Mughal Empire as a political institution'.

INDIA IN 1803

Disintegration: Eighteenth century ended for India in 1803 with the end of Mughal sovereignty and the disintegration of the Maratha confederacy. Baji Rao II signed the Treaty of Bassein on 31 December 1802. Wellesley described the Peshwa as the 'frozen nose' of the confederacy. 'Tugging at this frozen nose the whole body of the Maratha confederacy could be laid prostrate at the feet of the English.' This he succeeded in doing. Maratha military might was crushed on the battlefields of Assaye and Argaom and the Maratha-run Mughal government in Northern India broke down after repeated Maratha defeats at Aligarh, Patparganj and Laswari. Shah Alam II became a British pensioner. They were not prepared to use him even as a

symbol. Thus with the treaty of Bassein and subsequent British victories began a new era in Indian history. Troubles afterwards created by Jaswant Rao Holkar and Baji Rao II required only what may be described as mopping up operations. Mysore had fallen. The Jats could only snap their fingers at the British for a few years more from the ramparts of Bharatpore. The French, the only European rival of the British in India, no longer counted in India, though this was the year of the Peace of Amiens in Europe. No Indian power was destined to ascend from the ashes of the Mughal Empire.

Sikhs and Gurkhas: Nineteenth century, however, marks the emergence of two new powers, one within India and the other on the frontiers of India—Sikhs in the Punjab and Gurkhas in Nepal. They fought with some vigour to check the progress of British arms. Ranjit Singh, who was already in possession of Lahore, was destined to extend Sikh power from the Khyber to the Sutlej. In 1803 this was a possibility which could be envisaged by discerning British statesmen. Warren Hastings had this awareness. But within ten years of Ranjit Singh's death which took place in 1839, Sikhs, torn by dissensions, were destined to collapse just as the Marathas had at the opening of the century. The Gurkhas showed staying power. The Gurkha dynasty founded by Prithi Narayan emerged from a frontier hamlet on a knoll among wooden hills, gradually conquered all the neighbouring tribes and rival principalities in the valley—Kathmandu, Patan, Bhatgaon, Kirtipur. The eastern border of the new kingdom extended as far as Sikkim. Gurkha advance continued even after his early death (in 1775). In 1794 they overcame Kumaon and Garhwal and threatened Kangra valley. A raiding party was sent to Tibet. This opened the flood-gates of Chinese military might. The Nepalese were pushed back within sixteen kilometres from Nepal valley. The Chinese then withdrew, because they had advanced too far and retreat would be difficult. Nepalese advance in the west was also halted by the Sikhs at Kangra. The Nepalese now wanted to advance to the south and this brought them into conflict with the British. At the beginning of the twentieth century, on the edge of this cockpit of north-western Hindustan the British, the Sikhs and the Gurkhas were seeking an empire. They felt their way as the tide feels it with wide-sweeping fingers.

Rajput Decline: Rajput decline deserves special notice in the history of India in the eighteenth century. Rajputs were the sword arm of the Mughals—*Shamser-i-Islam*. Causes of the decline of the Mughal

aristocracy have already been analysed. Akbar gave the Rajputs an outlet for their energies. Clannish jealousy, land-grabbing and vendetta did not die out altogether but they were very much under control in the days of Rajput prosperity. But this prosperity ended in the days of Aurangzeb. Clannish feuds and vendetta reappeared in the most virulent form. Even repeated Maratha inroads could not bring the Rajput chiefs together. Mewar was practically in bondage to the Marathas. Yet Chandawats and Saktawats—rival clans—could not forget their *bair* or vendetta. In all the states of Rajputana there was a despicable crowd of weaklings and inefficient rogues at the top. Glorious Mewar, Mewar of Pratap Singh and Raj Singh, worthy opponents of Akbar and Aurangzeb, had sunk to the lowest depth of degradation. The tragedy of Krishnakumari, which best illustrates it, happened in 1810. But it has a background which takes us back to 1803, even beyond that to 1799. Krishnakumari, the Mewar princess, was betrothed to the Maharaja of Jodhpur in 1799. He died in 1803. His nephew Man Singh succeeded. After some years Krishnakumari was betrothed to the Jaipur ruler Jagat Singh. Daulat Rao Sindhia, who lorded over Rajputana, demanded that this marriage must not be negotiated. Udaipur was invaded. The Maharana was defeated and forced to agree not to negotiate this marriage. Man Singh demanded her hand in marriage. He invaded Udaipur, was defeated and fled back to Jodhpur. He was now assisted by the Pindari chief Amir Khan. Though Man Singh became insane, Amir Khan revived the old marriage proposal, invaded Mewar and defeated the Maharana. He demanded that Krishnakumari should either be given in marriage to the mad Jodhpur ruler or she must die. The Maharana could not fly to the Aravalli hills, as his great predecessors had done so often when they were overwhelmed in the plains because the court party's rival, the Saktawats, held their *jagirs* in the hills. Krishnakumari was given a cup of poison, strengthened with safflower and opium in order to ensure her death. This grim tragedy shows how low the Rajputs had fallen. Rajputs and Mughals walked hand in hand the downward path to their exit from history.

Maratha Decline: At the end of the eighteenth century there was complete bankruptcy of leadership among the Marathas, almost comparable to that of the degenerate Rajputs and decadent Mughals. An unfortunate quick sequence of deaths removed many of those men who had helped to keep the Marathas together—Mahadji Sindhia in 1794, Haripant and Ahalya Bai in 1795, Madhav Rao II in 1795,

Parashuram Bhau in 1799 and Nana Fadnavis in 1800. Their place was taken by men who only knew how to hasten disintegration by cantankerous opposition, indecision, revengefulness, cruelty and ambition. History of the Marathas during their last years was one of civil wars and bloody conflicts—the Widows' War and the battle of Seondha between Daulat Rao and Lakhwa Dada, battles of Newri and Satwas, Ujjain and Indore between Daulat Rao and Jaswant Rao Holkar, battles of Baramati and Hadaspur between Jaswant Rao and Baji Rao II. The loss of national liberty was the last fruit of civil wars.

Brahmin Ascendancy: In the context of Maratha downfall two special features of Maratha history deserve to be noted. Shivaji's tradition of non-intervention with religious grants and *inams* of the Muslims was continued throughout the Peshwa period. No pressure was put upon them, direct or indirect. Old grants were continued to mosques and tombs and provision was made for *urs* of Muslim saints and for *id-ul-fitr* festivities (*Chand-ratri*). After occupying Banaras Malhar Rao Holkar began to destroy Aurangzeb's mosque built on the ruins of the temple of Viswanath. But the Brahmins of Banaras appealed to the Peshwa and Holkar had to give up the plan. Maratha chieftains followed the healthy tradition set up by Shivaji. Muslim subjects of the Peshwas served them more faithfully than many Maratha chiefs. But over Hindu society and religion the Peshwas exercised their complete sway. Their orthodoxy was carried too far in the matter of caste purity and caste differences. This undid to a large extent the work of the saints and prophets of Maharashtra, Namdev, Tukaram and others. Up to the death of Baji Rao there was no orthodox reaction. But arrogant Hindu orthodoxy, so far as Hindu subjects were concerned, was a feature of Peshwa administrations during the next six decades. Terror of excommunication and governmentall intervention cowed down all castes of Hindus. But so far as the state was concerned the most noticeable feature of this orthodoxy was the senseless charities in the interest of the priestly castes. Rajputs and Jats were dunned for payment which they were not in a position to make and this extorted money was spent in senseless charities in the interest of the priestly castes. Vast sums were spent, as *dakshinas* or gifts and ostentatious largesse to Brahmins at a time when the Peshwa's government was suffering from chronic deficit—*kshay rog saman karoz rog*—deficits eating into the vitals of the state like consumption. This Brahmin ascendancy, with its crushing economic

load and social intolerance, was combined with toleration of non-Hindus.

Hindu Revival: Another aspect of India's history should also be noted. Chhatrasal was inspired by his guru and chief counsellor Prannathji just as Shivaji had been inspired by Ramdas. Chhatrasal, in the true Shivaji tradition, respected the Koran and places of Muslim worship and pilgrimage. It has been pointed out that where Hindu revival was not disciplined by ethical and religious forces, as in the case of the Jats, this tradition was ineffective. The Jat rebellion was a vast movement of peasants led by their landlords. It was not in any specific sense a Hindu religious movement. The Satnamis and Sikhs were of course to a large extent guided by their religious urge. But there were other complicating factors.

Fine Arts: It has been generally assumed that in the midst of universal decay and confusion fine arts disappeared. During the Mughal period the energies of the Mughal Empire were directed to the glorification of the court. Mughal art did not survive Mughal supremacy. It ended with Aurangzeb. Here we refer mainly to miniature painting. Its portraiture represented the pomp and pageantry of the court. Decline is noticeable also in architecture. 'The shoddy buildings of the Nawabs of Oudh are pretentious abominations.' But in remote centres, in Rajputana, Orissa and the South, fine building traditions were preserved. Post-Mughal artistic development was in painting in Rajputana and the Punjab Himalayas. It had its efflorescence in the eigthteenth century. Coomarswami thinks that no sectarian name should be given. He writes: 'Rajput painting was the counterpart of the vernacular literature of Hindustan. In Rajput painting, just as in the vernacular poetry of Hindustan, it is the folk art, fused with hieratic and classic literary tradition that emerges as the culture of the whole race...equally shared by kings and peasants...it is an art nearly related to the wonderful school of folk drama, the *yatras* of Bengal and the *rasus* of Upper India that without scenery, without the artistic display of costume, could arouse emotions which nowadays we scarcely experience.' The Rajput painters fall into two groups—Rajasthani and Pahari. Rajasthani extends from Bikaner to the borders of Gujarat, from Jodhpur to Gwalior and Ujjain. Pahari painting extends from Jammu to Almora. In spite of disturbances in Jaipur many familiar Rajput paintings were removed from this city. Numerous artists found refuge in remote valleys and many of them did marvellous work. In the middle of

the eighteenth century, in the Rajput state of Kishangarh painters showed 'a magic grace and refinement'. Their patron was the poet prince Suwant Singh, master artist Nehal Chand. Artists flying from Delhi found refuge in Kangra and Kulu valleys, in the small principality of Basoli and in Guler, at the entrance of the Kangra valley. They set the standard for other courts. In Kangra Sansar Chand was a great patron of painters. There was a remarkable burst of artistic activity. In the Pahari school Vaisnava inspiration illuminated the field and village life of Hindustan. Ramayana and Mahabharata also afforded themes. Decline began when it was first affected by western influence.

The spacious formal garden outlived the fall of the Mughal Empire and found a new lease of life in the gardens in Rajputana and Central India. The old skill survived only in Rajputana and the smaller native states of India. Wherever English influence was strong the typical Indian garden was the first to go.

There was no music in the court of Aurangzeb. But in the eighteenth century in the south as also in the north there were great centres of music—Carnatic as also Hindusthani. Muhammad Shah was a great lover of music. In his *darbar* there were two famous singers who made improvements in the *Kheyal* style of music and composed some thousands of *Kheyal* songs which they popularised. In Tanjore Tulaji Rao was a great patron of music in the southern style. There was also a stir in the musical circles in Bengal. In Bishnupur local singers acquainted with *Darbari* music evolved a new style, a distinct pattern. *Kavi* style of songs also became very popular. Ramprasad, famous for his devotional songs, Nidhiram Gupta for his *tappa* music, flourished in the eighteenth century. The splendid Nyaya philosophy was flọurishing side by side the *Vaisnava* lyrics. 'The inherent rationalism of this philosophy remained a secret with its exclusive professors. What a blow to the immense mass of Bengali superstition would this have been if it had been allowed to see the day!'

South Indian Society: Abbe Dubois, who knew South India in the last years of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth more thoroughly than any other foreigner, wrote in *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*: 'It is to caste distinction that India owes the preservation of her arts and industries.' No two professions could be combined and no change of profession took place in those days. But the worst thing about the caste system was its extreme rigidity, its exclusiveness and its sub-castes. Hinduism delights in

subdivisions. In Madras and Mysore Brahmins had three or four principal divisions, each subdivided again into twenty others. Union between one sub-caste and another was not permissible in marriage. Kshatriyas and Vaisyas had also various divisions and subdivisions but these castes were not at all numerous in South India. Sudras were very much divided and subdivided. They had 18 chief sub-castes with 108 lesser divisions. They represented the mass of the population and along with pariahs or outcastes they represented nine-tenths of the inhabitants. The two main divisions of Hindus in the south were Saiva and Vaisnava. The factions—right hand and left hand—were unknown in the north. In Northern India there were many sub-castes among the Hindus but not so many as in the south.

The economic classification made by Dubois is very significant. To the lowest class belonged those whose property was roughly below the value of Rs 50. They formed nine-twentieth of the entire population. To the second class belonged those whose property ranged from Rs 50 to Rs 250. They formed six-twentieth of the entire population. The third class whose property ranged from Rs 250 to Rs 500 comprised one-fifth of the population. In the fourth class he would place those whose property ranged from Rs 500 to Rs 1000. They formed three-fortieth of the population—mainly Brahmins and well-to-do Sudras. To the fifth class belonged those whose property ranged from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000. They formed one-thirtieth of the whole population—Brahmins, Vaisyas and wealthy sections of the Sudras. In the sixth class property might range from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000. Only about 1/100th of the population belonged to this class—half Brahmin, the other half belonging to other castes. The eighth class—range Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000—comprised 1/200th of the population. Property valued at five to ten thousand pagodas (1 pagoda=4 rupees) was owned by those who had held the highest offices for quite a long time and by the richest merchants. Those who exceeded 10,000 pagodas could easily be counted in each province. This economic classification does not apply to Northern India in all its details. In the three grades Rs 50, 50-250, 250-500 there was a much lower proportion of population in the north. In the wealthier section the proportion of Brahmins was much less, Muslims forming a sizeable section of rich men. Brahmin economic and social dominance was much more effective in India, south of the Peninsula. Buchanan Hamilton reported on Madras, Canara, Malabar in the opening years of the nineteenth century that the 'degenerate' age had already

commenced and the lower classes not being so charitable as before, Brahmins were compelled to take to 'unworthy' employment. They could no longer be occupied only with the proper duties of that caste. But they still formed the socio-spiritual aristocracy among the Hindus most emphatically in Madras, Mysore, Canara and Malabar and in varying degrees in the rest of India.

Some Significant Changes: By 1803 British administration had taken shape in Bengal. This province was the laboratory for British administrative experiments. The new system was gradually extended to the rest of the country. British administrators attached great importance to structure, pattern and process. To them the institution of *panchayat* was rude and primitive conforming to the needs and character of an almost feudal society rather than one with advanced trade, commerce and agriculture. There was progressive decay of the old class of 'native' officers of justice. In Poona there were standing *panchayats*. They flourished up to the end of the eighteenth century. In Mysore when the British took over, it was found that the *panchayats* were in general use. Elphinstone reported that in the Deccan under the worst of governments, that of Baji Rao II, the poor were left to do and they did justice to themselves. Reza Khan is said to have remarked that the Hindus settled most of their civil disputes among themselves and did not ordinarily come to the *Dewani* Courts at Murshidabad. Civil tension was thus relieved by arbitration. Arbitration councils, caste *panchayats* were shouldered out by law courts and a streamlined system of civil justice led to the disruption of social bonds by fostering a litigious spirit with the attendant spirit of lying which became a feature of the new system of civil justice. Hasty land revenue settlements led to a mass of litigation, directly or indirectly connected with the rights, tenures and interests of owners or occupiers of lands. Money power became everywhere manifest, the new system of justice being the best that money could buy. The wolf and the lamb were left to fight out their quarrel. What India needed was an organization of summary courts of equity and not an elaborate cumbrous and unsuitable system of civil jurisprudence.

The zamindar, *talukdar*, *jagirdar*, *poligar* existed before British rule. Under the British, the nomenclature was changed and their economic relations with the government became more systematic and well-defined. Under the old system the common man no doubt suffered but there was something like a feudal attachment. The landlords did generally pass some of their well-being to the ryots. There was depen-

dence as also paternalism. Rural indebtedness had not reached any noticeable proportion. The money-lender was not the tyrant of later years. In the south the cultivator could reckon on the manufacturer who in the days of prosperity would buy up surplus grain and even lend money if they were in arreas of rent (Dubois). But disappearence of domestic manufacture synchronised with a new administrative set up and a new land revenue system. In Bengal zamindars used to advance *takavi* loans to the ryots. They were no longer in a position to play this role. The village money-lender with his tentacles emerges as a new sinister figure.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

WARS AND CONQUESTS (1805-1818)

Non-Intervention: Lord Cornwallis came to India for the second time as Governor-General in 1805 but he died within three months of his arrival. During this short period he succeeded in initiating his new policy —British interference should be confined within the limits of British possessions. His successor Sir George Barlow, a civil servant of the Company, resolved to carry out his predecessor's plan of abandoning all communication with the territories to the westward of the Jumna. The river Chambal was declared to be the boundary between British Dominion and Sindhia's territory. A treaty was signed with Holkar, who was still in flight, in December 1805. Holkar agreed to renounce all his claims to any territory to the north of the Chambal and all his claims on the allies of the British Government. The British Government also agreed not to interfere with the possessions or dependencies of Holkar south of the Chambal. Bundi, Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kotah and other Rajput states were left to the tender mercies of the Maratha chiefs and the Pindaris. Barlow's measures were calculated to secure insecure tranquillity. Miseries inflicted on Rajputana and Central India continued. 'What was done in 1817 might have been accomplished with quite as much reason, with more ease and still less cost, in 1805. Sindhia's power was then completely broken. Holkar was a fugitive.' Barlow, to some extent, undid the work of Wellesley in obedience to the wishes of the Court of Directors. He did not care for tumult or confusion on the British borders.

Lord Minto, President of the Board of Control, was appointed Governor-General of India in 1807. His policy was retrenchment of expenditure and preservation of tranquillity. He was intent upon following a moderate and pacific policy. But circumstances made a departure from non-intervention inevitable. Minto was responsible for the final establishment of British authority in Bundelkhand. The fort of Kalinjar was captured. It ceased to be the rallying point of lawless elements. Pindaris penetrated into the British territory of Mirzapur via Rewa. Therefore Rewa had to be brought under British domination. Haryana, to the west of Delhi, inhabited by the Jats was always in turmoil. An Irish sailor, George Thomas, had, for some time, established himself there. This tract had to be brought under the subjection of the British Government. But the most notice-

able departure from non-intervention was marked by the extension of the British frontier from the Jumna to the left bank of the Sutlej.

Lord Minto sent Charles Metcalfe to Ranjit Singh in June 1807. Napoleon and Czar Alexander I concluded the Treaty of Tilsit in July 1807. Napoleon's diplomatic offensive was taken more seriously than the situation warranted. Metcalfe was expected to win over Ranjit Singh in the interest of the British against a Franco-Russian offensive. The Sikh ruler very naturally tried to take advantage of the British overture to conquer the country between the Sutlej and the Jumna. He thought that if the British wanted his support they should pay a price for it. But in the meantime British diplomacy had succeeded in establishing an Anglo-Persian and an Anglo-Turkish understanding and the British Indian Government no longer stood in need of Ranjit Singh's alliance. The Governor-General now wanted that an extension on the Indian side of the Sutlej of the ambitious military power of Ranjit Singh should be opposed. Ranjit Singh was apprised that the chiefs between the Sutlej and the Jumna were under British protection but the British would not interfere in the trans-Sutlej country if he yielded, and Ranjit Singh yielded. A military post was established by the British on the left bank of the Sutlej. A treaty, known as the Treaty of Amritsar, was now concluded. The British frontier was thus pushed from the Jumna to the Sutlej. The diplomatic offensive against Napoleon also included an embassy to Persia under Sir John Malcolm and an embassy to Kabul under Mount Stuart Elphinstone. But these missions were abortive.

Lord Minto's administration saw the suppression of piracy in the Persian Gulf and of the pirate tribes of the coast of Oman, thus ensuring the security of British commerce in the Persian Gulf. Operations against French and Dutch possessions in the Indian seas were successful. Mauritius was also captured from the French as also Moluccas, Amboyna, Java and its dependencies but all the Dutch territories were restored in 1814.

Anglo-Nepalese War (1814–1816): Lord Moira, later Lord Hastings, succeeded Lord Minto as Governor-General in 1813. The contests which had been impending for many years could no longer be avoided. Wars succeeded wars and conquests followed conquests. War with Nepal was the first to begin. By 1814 the Gurkha frontier was co-terminous with the British along seven hundred miles from the Tista to the Sutlej. Disputes were inevitable. The new Governor-General demanded evacuation of some of the disputed lands. Gurkhas were

not prepared to comply with the demand and the British Government declared war. In Amar Singh Thapa the Gurkhas had a very able commandant. For the British it was the first mountain campaign in India. The British thought that all that they needed was to advance as in the plains but the Gurkhas were expert in ambuscades and they were ably led by Bal Bahadur Singh and Amar Singh. The British suffered a reverse at Kalanga in which as many as five European officers were killed including Major-General Gillespie. Kalanga ultimately fell to the British but they suffered another reverse at Jaithak. The brave and cunning hillmen made things very difficult for the British. But David Ochterlony, in another sector, compelled the Gurkhas to withdraw to the east of the Kali river which is the present western frontier of Nepal. He succeeded in changing the whole face of the campaign by his victory at Malaun. There were negotiations for peace. But the Gurkhas resumed their hostilities. By now the British had learnt their lesson. Under the leadership of Ochterlony the British army advanced to Makwanpur where he succeeded in defeating the Gurkhas. It has been said that the Gurkhas were undone by excessive confidence. By the treaty of Sagauli (1816) Kumaon and Garhwal and some other military posts were annexed to British possessions. Petty hill *rajas* to the west and north were re-established under the British. A British Resident was placed at Kathmandu. All territory wrested by the Gurkhas from the Sikkim *raja* were restored to him. The British also secured some of the most important hill stations—Simla, Mussorie, Almora, Nainital. These hill stations were a legacy of British victory in this war. It has been said that these hill stations made their contribution to the consolidation of British rule in India by providing a respite to the British from the climate of the plains.

The Pindari War (1817–1818): The Pindaris were organised plunderers with their settlements in Central India. They had a loosely independent organisation. Their origin is to be traced in the south of India. They have been described as the baleful dregs of the exhausted military establishments of Bijapur and Golkonda. They were like pestilence after famine. Their numbers increased as a consequence of the long anarchy that prevailed throughout the eighteenth century in Central India. They were joined by persons from every caste and every quarter. They now clashed with the British.

While war was going on between the Gurkhas and the British, serious trouble was brewing in other parts of India. In October 1815

a Pindari band of 8,000 plundered Nizam's territory, the frontier of Masulipatam and extended their depredations along the line of the Godavari and Wardha. In February 1816 another band of 10,000 plundered in the vicinity of Masulipatam, Guntur and the entire British territory in this region—more than three hundred villages. Their depredations were confined to the territory of the British and their allies. In October 1816 a roving band under Chitoo crossed the Narmada and left a plundering trail between the Narmada and the Krishna and another roving band marched into the Konkan and plundered the west coast. Another body marched upon Parlakimedi. A detachment of Pindaris was cut down in the valley of the Tapti. Lord Hastings now decided to make an end of the Pindaris.

A campaign began in October 1817. He gathered an army of 43,000 that would close in upon Central India from the north. The army of the south was to consist of 70,000 fighting men. The Pindaris were in the region from Bhilsa westward through a line of 96 to 112 kilometres, Chitoo being on the west, Karim Khan in the centre and Wasil Muhammad on the left. The arrangements of Lord Hastings were upset by complications at Poona and Nagpur. Holkar was also hostile. But he would not permit the Pindaris to take advantage of these complications. The bands of Karim Khan and Wasil Muhammad were hotly pursued. Numbers were cut off. But he could not make one impressive example of the Pindaris. Their leaders escaped. Karim Khan surrendered to John Malcolm. Wasil Muhammad, after some wanderings, was given up by Sindhia with whom he had taken refuge. Chitoo's bands were dispersed and he wandered and after some time was heard no more. Amir Khan, leader of the most organised Pindari band, was induced by force and negotiations to disband his troops. Thus the power of the Pindaris was completely broken and order was restored at long last in Central India.

Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818): The outbreak of war with the Peshwa and Bhonslas of Nagpur has a complicated history. The policy of non-intervention had created great disorder outside the British sphere of influence. Daulat Rao Sindhia had not the courage to help the Pindaris and Lord Hastings would not follow any temporising policy. He asked Sindhia to recall his troops from Rajputana. Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kota, Bundi and the petty chiefs in Bundelkhand and Malwa were, one after another, brought under British protection. The Nawab of Bhopal accepted usual terms of subsidiary dependence. In 1817 a British army marched on Gwalior and forced Sindhia to

agree to withdraw from what was regarded as his sphere of influence. The Treaty of Surji Anjangaon was abrogated, and the Holkar Government agreed to the presence of a Resident.

Baji Rao II was certainly not the man to revive the Maratha confederacy. After the Treaty of Bassein (1802) the British Government would not recognise him as the head of the confederacy. But he had to settle certain claims upon the Gaikwad of Baroda for the adjustment of which Gaikwad's Dewan Gangadhar Shastri came to Poona in 1815 under a British safe conduct. He was murdered and Baji Rao's favourite Trimbak Rao was deeply implicated in it. The Peshwa was forced to give him up to the British, but he succeeded in escaping from British custody in 1816. Baji Rao's complicity was suspected in this affair. His duplicity induced the Governor-General to compel him to accept a new treaty. All his claims on Sindhia, Holkar, Gaikwad, Chief of Berar and others had to be given up. He had to cede the fort of Ahmadnagar and other claims, territorial or pecuniary, upon Bundelkhand. This was the treaty of Poona which he was forced to accept in July 1817. He formally renounced his headship of the Maratha confederacy. Though the Peshwa ratified the treaty events now moved very fast at Poona. The Peshwa made an extraordinary levy of troops. He burnt the Poona Residency, fought at Kirki, was thoroughly defeated, again fought at Koregaon and Ashti and after repeated defeats surrendered to John Malcolm in June 1818. Appa Saheb, who was first regent, then ruler of Nagpur, tried, like the Peshwa, to attack the Residency. He was defeated at Sitabaldi hills in November 1817 and suffered a severe defeat in the plain to the south of Nagpur about a month after. He fled to the Punjab. In Ujjain the regent Tulsi Bai was murdered and the war party in the Holkar's army was in the ascendant. But the Holkar's army was defeated at Mahidpur. An important British achievement was the capture of the strong fort at Asirgarh in 1819. Thus ended the third Anglo-Mysore War.

Lord Hastings had complained on his arrival that his predecessor had left him seven quarrels, each demanding an appeal to arms. All these quarrels were now settled by decisions of arms. British success was complete. But there was no important engagement, not even a sensational incident. There was no general action except Mahidpur. It is a record of small encounters. Indians displayed no skill, courage or enterprise. There was no leadership. Confusion, pusillanimity and inaptitude were symbolised in Baji Rao II and Appa Saheb. Lord

Hastings succeeded in extirpating the Pindaris and putting an end to strife among Indian powers. It was the closing act of an old drama.

Settlement of 1818: British diplomacy's concern so far was with 'country powers'. Now with the exception of the Sikh state in the Punjab there was no other country power in India but only 'native states'. The settlement of 1818 completed the creation of this native states system. The territory of the Peshwa was annexed by the British Government. The districts under Holkar in Khandesh and the Satpura hills and those in the Deccan which were intermixed with the territories of the Peshwa and the Nizam were also annexed. Sindhia had to transfer Ajmir to British territory. From the Raja of Nagpur the eastern portion of the valley of the Narmada on both banks extending to the district of Saugar was annexed by the British. Sambalpur was also ceded. A line of communication was opened from Bengal to the West Coast. New arrangements were also made with the Nizam and the Gaikwad. Besides the territorial additions and the establishment of a new political system the most important result was the opening up of the whole of India to the British. New districts and dependencies were now brought into existence in Malwa, Rajputana and the greatest part of the Deccan in the newly opened up region. British paramountcy was now consolidated.

Hastings was helped by a band of really great administrators —John Malcolm in Malwa and Central India, Mountstuart Elphinstone in Poona, Charles Metcalfe and James Tod in Rajputana and Thomas Munro in Madras. Many claims and overlordships had to be settled and separate small entities had to be recognised in many cases. Baji Rao II was allowed to enjoy a pension of eight *lakhs* a year and settled at Bithur, 16 kilometres from Kanpur. The scattered fragments of the Maratha confederacy formed new native states. Separate treaties were concluded with Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kota, Bundi, minor states of Rajputana and the smaller states of Malwa and Bundelkhand.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

WARS AND ANNEXATIONS (1818-1856)

EASTERN FRONTIER

British rule was now established and accepted. The period of internal wars was over. The second phase of British expansion was now to begin. Lord Hastings resigned in 1823. John Adam, Senior Member of the Council, acted for some months. Lord Amherst was now appointed Governor-General. Immediately after his arrival he had to face the prospect of a war with the King of Ava. In the sixties of the eighteenth century Alompra, founder of the new kingdom of Ava, was extending his sway from Siam to Tenasserim. King Bodawpaya added Arrakan in 1785, Manipur in 1813 and Assam in 1816. As early as 1818 demands were made for the surrender of Chittagong, Dacca and even Murshidabad. But these demands were not pressed at that time. But the boundaries of this new state were conterminous with those of the British—in Assam, Cachar and Arrakan. In 1823 the Burmese attacked the island of Shahpuri near Chittagong, which was a British possession. There were also Burmese movements on the Assam border. War was formally declared by Amherst in 1824. The British plan was a maritime expedition because the British did not want to face jungle warfare. An expedition was sent from Madras to Rangoon. In the meantime in Arrakan the Burmese General Maha Bandula achieved some success. At Ramu in Chittagong district he succeeded in defeating a British detachment. The British campaign was mismanaged. But Maha Bandula was killed in 1825. He was an unusual commandant who by sheer character had kept his half-disciplined troops together. The Burmese troops were thoroughly demoralised. The campaign dragged on till February 1826. Tenasserim was taken from the sea. Further advance of the British army to Yandaboo compelled the King of Ava to accept British terms. Arrakan and Tenasserim were surrendered to the British Government and the King of Ava renounced all rights of interference in Assam, Cachar and Jaintia and recognised the independence of Manipur. They agreed to pay a war indemnity of one million sterling. The King was to receive a British minister at Ava. According to Fortescue, historian of the British army: 'The first

Burmese War went near to be a disastrous failure.' A commercial treaty was also concluded.

A portion of the Brahmaputra Valley was placed under an Ahom prince but it was ultimately annexed in 1835. Cachar was restored to its old ruler but he died without any issue and it was annexed in 1832. Jaintia put under a vassal prince was ultimately annexed in 1835. Manipur was restored to the old royal family. Thus was the eastern frontier settled.

Fall of Bharatpur (1826): Ranjit Singh of Bharatpur successfully defended his fort against Lord Lake from 7th January to 17th April 1805. Four successive attacks were repulsed but as his ally Jaswant Rao Holkar who was roving about was forced by the British to fly he thought it proper to sue for peace and agreed to promise his allegiance to the British. But these four failures of British assaults were a shock to British prestige. Ranjit Singh of Bharatpur used to say: 'The kingdom of the Marathas was in their saddle but mine is within the ramparts.' Strong forts in Rajputana and Malwa were boastingly called 'Choota Bharatpur'.

After the death of Ranjit Singh of Bharatpur there was disputed succession. Ochterlony, then Resident at Delhi, caused further complication by his intervention. Doorjan Sal claimed to be the regent for the boy king Balwant Singh. A crisis developed. Doorjan Sal made preparations to defend his position. The British Government interfered. Former failures had made the British cautious. Combermere with an army of 30,000 besieged Bharatpur and succeeded in taking it after a siege which lasted for forty days. If the attack on Bharatpur had failed this time it would have added to the complications of the war with Burma and created complications in India. In those days Chiefs and Rajas of Hindustan used to say: 'Yes, yes, you may bully us but go and take Bharatpur.'

The Anglo-Afghan War: A French menace, real or supposed in the opening years of the century, was now followed by a Russian menace. Russian advance, threatening Afghanistan through Persia, was perhaps real enough. Russian influence in Teheran was paramount. Russia encouraged Persia to recover her eastern possessions. Herat was one of their objectives. In 1837 Herat was besieged by them. The fear of a Russian threat to India appeared to be very real in the minds of British statesmen. The Russians could alarm the British by their moves in Persia. The British thought they could counteract this by their moves in Afghanistan. This is the general

background of what happened after the arrival of Lord Auckland in India.

Timur Shah, eldest son and successor of Ahmad Shah Abdali, died in 1793. The Afghan monarchy held sway over Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and exercised a nominal authority over Kashmir, Peshawar, Multan and Sindh. Under Zaman Shah, fifth son of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan heritage broke up. His threatened Indian invasions ended in complete failure. There were serious internal troubles. British diplomacy also induced Persians to create difficulties for him in the west. He was dethroned and blinded by his elder brother Shah Mahmud in 1800 and Mahmud was in turn defeated by another brother Shah Shuja. He was again in his turn deposed by Shah Mahmud. Both Shah Shuja and blinded Shah Zaman took shelter with the British at Ludhiana. Shah Mahmud was deposed by the Barakzai clan of Afghanistan in 1818. His son Kamran retained Herat. While all this was happening Ranjit Singh was consolidating his hold in the Punjab, Kashmir, Kohat, Tonk, Bannu, Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan and thus brought into existence a strong buffer state. What had appeared to be an Afghan menace in the days of Zaman Shah thus disappeared.

But things gradually took a different turn. The Barakzais were divided into different chiefships. The boldest of the Barakzais was Dost Muhammad who established himself in Kabul in 1826. Dost Muhammad was recognised as Amir of Kabul by his rival brothers. Shah Shuja attempted in 1834 to re-establish himself but he was defeated and driven out by Dost Muhammad and returned to Ludhiana. Ranjit Singh, however, succeeded in defeating the Barakzai brother Sultan Muhammad who had been established in Peshawar and extended his sway up to the Khyber Pass.

At this stage appeared the Russian menace. Russia's Asiatic designs seemed to threaten the British and when Persia attacked Herat under Russian instigation the British felt that India's gateway was threatened. But was the situation so threatening that it required armed intervention in Afghanistan? There was no doubt that the Governor-General Lord Auckland was goaded by Palmerston, the British foreign minister. Alexander Burnes was sent on a commercial mission to Kabul but really to talk politics. When the siege of Herat was begun by the Persians the seeds of the Afghan War were sown. Dost Muhammad was eager for an alliance with the British but he wanted to recover Peshawar from Ranjit Singh. He had failed to recover it in

a bloody battle at Jamrud. But Auckland was not in a position to persuade Ranjit Singh to give up Peshawar. Dost Muhammad now turned to the Russians. Auckland concluded that this meant hostility to the British. An arrangement was arrived at with Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja in 1838. A tripartite treaty recognised Shah Shuja as the ruler of Kabul. Ranjit Singh had absolutely no intention of marching to Afghanistan. But if Shah Shuja was to be restored to the throne, who should do the military work that would secure his restoration to Kabul? It was at this stage decided by Auckland that the British would do this work. The policy of the war—the substitution by the British of a monarch whom the people of Afghanistan had repeatedly spued out—an exile for about thirty years—was the fatal step. The policy of obstructing Russian intrigues led to British invasion of Afghanistan. But the siege of Herat which led to the inception of this policy was raised in September 1838. There was therefore no necessary justification for the invasion of Afghanistan. Ranjit Singh saw to it that it was an entirely British effort. It proved to be an unqualified disaster. Auckland was supported by the British cabinet.

The British army of the Indus moved in December 1838. Kandahar was occupied in April 1839. Ghazni was taken by storm in July. Dost Muhammad fled. Kabul was occupied. Shah Shuja was restored. But to retain him in power a British garrison was left in Kabul. Macnaghten remained as the political officer in Kabul in charge of administration. The English forces were distributed in Kabul, Ghazni, Kandahar and Jalalabad. There was sporadic revolt. Though Dost Muhammad Khan was captured in 1840 there was an outbreak in Kabul in 1841. Dost Muhammad's son Akbar Khan led the insurgents and Macnaghten negotiated with him for withdrawal. But Macnaghten was murdered at a conference. Before him Alexander Burnes had also been murdered. It was decided by the British to retreat. Of the 16,500 soldiers who marched out of the cantonments only Dr. Bryden, a sole survivor, succeeded in reaching Jalalabad. Shah Shuja was murdered by a nephew. For the British it was a catalogue of disaster and disgrace. The most remarkable thing about it was its awful completeness.

Auckland was succeeded by Ellenborough in February 1842. Kandahar, Ghazni and Jalalabad were still in British hands and the Sikh alliance was still operative though Ranjit Singh had died in 1839. But Afghanistan had to be evacuated. Before that General Pollock defeated Akbar Khan in two battles, took Kabul and joined by

General Knott, marched to Kandahar by way of Ghazni. European prisoners were rescued. British prestige was re-established. They blew up the great bazaar of Kabul and the army returned by the Khyber Pass. Dost Muhammad who was a prisoner was allowed to return to his country. For the mistaken policy of this Afghan War blame should be shared by Palmerston and Auckland. The high-sounding proclamations of Ellenborough did not deceive the people. The restoration of Dost Muhammad to the throne was a confession of defeat. There was loss of British military reputation as also wanton alienation of the Afghans.

A direct consequence of this Anglo-Afghan War was the British conquest of Sind. Alexander Burnes had in 1831 journeyed up the Indus with a gift of English cart horses for Ranjit Singh. A Syed on the water's edge lifted up his hands and exclaimed: 'Sind is now gone since the English have seen the river which is the road to its conquest.' A Hindu merchant is said to have remarked: 'This tribe never began as friends without ending as enemies by seizing the country.' Ranjit Singh had been anxious to expand in the direction of Sind. The British then assumed the role of protectors of the Amirs from the Sikhs. Colonel Pottinger was sent in 1832 with a navigation treaty in his pocket and became virtually the first Resident in Sind. The Indus was now open to British commerce. There was a clause in the commercial treaty that 'they would never look with covetousness upon the possessions of each other'. But Sind became the military base of the Afghan campaign. After its complete failure the British wanted to show some other military achievement, something to boast of. James Outram, the Resident at Hyderabad in Sind, was superseded and Sir Charles Napier was placed in supreme military and political control in 1842. He described the annexation of Sind as a 'humane piece of rascality'. Outram's protests were brushed aside. The Amirs were defeated at Miami in 1842. They were exiled and Sind was annexed. Of course Sind would have been annexed on some pretext or another. It was the direct effect of the invasion of Afghanistan through Sind.

RISE AND FALL OF THE SIKH MONARCHY

The Misls: Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India for the last time in 1767. After that date the Sikh *Misls* governed the Punjab. Their organisation has been described as 'theocratic confederate feudalism'.

The Central Government was very weak and after some time it ceased to function. The link of a common enemy was gone and this became the signal for disorders within. The Bhangi *Misl* and the Kanheya *Misl* strove in succession to establish some sort of ascendancy over the rest, but it was reserved for Ranjit Singh, head of the Sukerchukia *Misl*, to 'display from the ruins of their commonwealth the standard of monarchy'.

Early Career of Ranjit Singh: Ranjit Singh was born in November 1780. His father Maha Singh died in 1790. In his seventeenth year Ranjit asserted himself and began his career of petty warfare and systematic aggression. He joined Zaman Shah, grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali, when the Kabul monarch invaded the Punjab in 1798. The Durrani project failed but Ranjit Singh seized Lahore from its Sikh rulers in 1799. His next important acquisition was Amritsar which he occupied in 1805. In alliance with his mother-in-law Sada Kaur, leader of the Kanheya *Misl*, and his friend Fateh Singh, chief of the Ahluwalia *Misl*, Ranjit pursued with almost constant success this policy of absorption of the territory of the princes and princelings of the Punjab, and the process was completed by the year 1823. As all the trans-Sutlej *Misls* were one after another absorbed, Fateh Singh gradually sank into the position of a dependent ally but Sada Kaur with her masterful personality soon came to grief; she was put under restraint in 1821, her territory being annexed to the Lahore State. Local dynasticism thus disappeared, giving place to a consolidated monarchy.

Ranjit Singh's Treaty with the British (1809): But Ranjit Singh failed in his attempts to absorb the cis-Sutlej *Misls* and could not extend his sway over the country between the Sutlej and the Jumna. He led three expeditions into the cis-Sutlej region. Success was within his grasp but the British Government intervened. Lord Minto through his ambassador Metcalfe demanded that Ranjit Singh should confine himself to the territory on the other side of the Sutlej. The serious attitude of the British Government, his own inability to meet the British power at this moment, his fear that the Sikh chiefs on his side of the Sutlej would try to take advantage of the impasse, led him finally to agree with the British demand, and the treaty of Amritsar was concluded in April 1809. The Sutlej was recognised as the boundary, Ranjit Singh retaining the territories he had possessed on the left side of the Sutlej before the coming of the British ambassador.

Expansion of Ranjit Singh's Kingdom: After the treaty of Amritsar

Ranjit Singh conquered the hill states of the Punjab, annexed Multan, seized Kashmir from the Afghans, and also conquered Kohat, Tonk, Bannu, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan and Peshawar. There is no doubt that he would have annexed Sind as well but for British intervention. The British Government would not let his sway extend to the sea. Ranjit Singh's Kingdom extended from the Sutlej to the defiles of the Khyber and from Little Tibet in the north to the confines of Sind in the south.

Ranjit Singh had to fight with the Afghans on several occasions. In 1813 a pitched battle was fought on the plains of Chuch not far from Attock. The Durrani monarch's *Wazir*, Fateh Khan, wanted to seize from him the fort of Attock which Ranjit had recently taken. The Afghans were completely defeated. In 1823 a second pitched battle was fought at Nowshera, the Afghans attempting to prevent Ranjit Singh's sway being consolidated on the left bank of the Sutlej. The Afghans were defeated also on this occasion. In1837 Dost Muhammad of Kabul strove to seize Jamrud and Shub Qudur, two important Sikh forts and in a skirmish succeeded in killing Hari Singh Nalwa, governor of Peshawar. Ranjit was more than able to hold his own on the north-western frontier and he was also successful in his management of the border tribes.

Ranjit Singh's Administration: Ranjit Singh set up a strong and efficient system of civil administration and his greatest merit was that he made an unprejudiced use of talented men of all religions. He disciplined his army on the western model and took Allard, Ventura and some other Frenchmen into his service to train his soldiers. He had a standing army of nearly 40,000, largely infantry, equipped and paid by the State. His park of artillery was efficient. 'The rank and file of the Sikh army became, under the training of the skilled officers, the finest rank and file in the world. They wanted but officers to be invincible.'

Estimate of Ranjit Singh: Ranjit Singh has been described as the very embodiment of practical sagacity despite unlettered ignorance. His memory was prodigious. In his military expeditions he was accustomed to issue instructions to his officers in such details that little or no initiative was left to them. The personal devotion and loyalty that he inspired in his commanders and soldiers smoothed their path of duty. Among his principal achievements we must count his very successful defence of his new-born Kingdom against the Afghans. An Indian chieftain who could secure the support of all sections of his

people—Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims—who could defend the north-western frontier against a powerful Afghanistan and unruly border tribes and administer it successfully, who could train an army whose fighting qualities came as a revelation to their British opponents, who could to a certain extent furnish Indian nationalism with what it greatly needed—a tradition of strength—must always stand in the forefront of great men of Indian history.

Successors of Ranjit Singh: During the last years of Ranjit, in view of his declining health and the weak character of the heir-apparent Kharak Singh, the crafty courtiers around him formed factions. Immediately after his death mutual dissensions, distrust and lawlessness began and precipitated the downfall of the Sikh monarchy.

Ranjit Singh died on 27 June 1839. His eldest son Kharak Singh, who succeeded him, died in November 1840, and Nao Nihal Singh, his son, who had inherited much of the ability of his grandfather, was killed by accident or design on the following day. Sher Singh, another son of Ranjit Singh, succeeded. He was assassinated in September 1843. The army was now the master of the State. It looked upon itself as the representative body of the people, as the *Khalsa* itself. Dalip Singh, youngest son of Ranjit Singh, who was only six years old, was proclaimed as the new ruler. Events moved very fast. The factions that had come into existence during the last days of Ranjit Singh were now non-existent and the army dictated and made and unmade the *Wazirs*. The strength of the standing army of Lahore was almost doubled by the year 1845. It became self-dependent. Early in November 1845, Raja Lal Singh was nominated the *Wazir* and Sardar Tej Singh was confirmed as Commander-in-Chief.

Lord Hardinge and the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46): The English authorities, convinced that the machinery of government would break up in the Punjab, adopted measures for strengthening the frontier forts. The Sikh soldiers had their apprehensions of their growing neighbour and could not understand why 'inefficiency of rule should be construed into hostility of purpose'. It seems that both the Sikh soldiery and the British Government regarded the ensuing war as purely defensive. The English advanced bodies of troops towards the Sutlej. Moreover, Major Broadfoot, British agent for cis-Sutlej affairs, was responsible for proceedings that ultimately denoted war and the Sikh army became convinced that war with the English was inevitable. The Lahore Chiefs made use of this feeling for their own ends and

urged the army to proceed against the English in order that it might be destroyed.

The Sikhs crossed the Sutlej in December 1845, and the English hastened to oppose them. The Sikh leaders, Lal Singh and Tej Singh, kept up an appearance of devotion to the interests of the State but were 'anxious to be upheld as the ministers of a dependent Kingdom by grateful conquerors'. The Sikhs were defeated in four successive engagements at Mudki (December 1845), Ferozeshahr (December 1845), Aliwal (January 1846) and Sobraon (February 1846), but it was treachery more than bad leadership that was responsible for this failure. About the battle of Ferozeshahr Malleson says: 'The brave untutored warriors, led by generals who were betraying them, had, if they had only known it, won a victory.' Lal Singh and Tej Singh, however, did not press forward but withdrew, making a gift of a victory to the English. In spite of their steadfastness and resolution the Sikh army lost the battle of Sobraon because of the 'discreet policy and shameless treason' of its leaders.

The English crossed the Sutlej and occupied Lahore in February 1846, and finally after some negotiations a treaty was concluded in March 1846. The Jalandhar Doab was to be ceded to the British and the Sikh treasury was to pay 1½ million sterling for the expenses of the war. The strength of the Sikh army was to be reduced. As the Sikh *Durbar* was not in a position to pay ⅔ of the indemnity, they surrendered the province of Kashmir, which was sold for one million to Gulab Singh, the Dogra Chief of Jammu. The Lahore State was thus reduced in size and Lal Singh, who retained his office of *Wazir*, was rewarded for his treachery by getting such a dreaded rival as Gulab Singh out of the way. A supplementary arrangement was made in December 1846, placing Dalip Singh under British tutelage. The administration of the Kingdom was virtually handed over to the British Resident, Sir Henry Lawrence, who was supported by a British force stationed at Lahore. Thus the British Government assumed 'full authority to direct and control all matters in every department of the (Lahore) State'.

Lord Dalhousie and the Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49): This was the arrangement of Lord Hardinge. But his successor, Lord Dalhousie, found the system of his predecessor unworkable. There was a local rebellion at Multan headed by its governor, Mulraj, and two British officers were murdered in April 1848. A British expedition was not sent out at once to Multan because of the hot weather. In the mean-

time Rani Jindan, mother of the minor Maharaja, was exiled to the fort of Chunar in view of her hostile attitude. Events moved very fast. Chhattar Singh, governor of Hazara, revolted. His son Sher Singh, who was at the head of the *Durbar* troops, gave his support to the movement, which became general. Thus a crisis was precipitated, and Lord Dalhousie decided that as the Sikh people wished war, 'they should have it with a vengeance'.

Sher Singh commanded the Sikh army. Two battles were fought, at Chilianwala (January 1849) and at Gujrat (February 1849). From the British point of view Chilianwala was 'a dangerous and difficult affair'. It was only technically a British victory. But at Gujrat Lord Gough, the British Commander-in-Chief, won a complete victory. It is only proper to note that 'no troops could have fought better than the Sikhs, no army could have been worse led.' Multan was stormed in January 1849. Chhattar Singh and Sher Singh surrendered in March 1849.

By the treaty of December 1846, the British Government had full authority to direct and control all matters in the Punjab, and the Lahore State was paying 22 *lakhs* a year in respect of the expenses of the British force stationed at Lahore. So the British Government was naturally in the position of a guardian and protector of the young Maharaja. Against this British protection the Sikh army rose. The rising was suppressed, but there was no valid reason for depriving the guiltless minor Maharaja of his inheritance. The aggressive imperialism of Lord Dalhousie, however, surmounted every moral and legal obstacle and the Punjab was annexed by proclamation on 3 March 1849, the boy Maharaja being pensioned off.

The Second Burmese War (1852): If a power is in an expansionist mood there are always grounds for disputes. According to the Treaty of Yandaboo the King of Burma agreed to receive a British Resident at Ava. But successive Residents were treated with indignity and the British Resident was withdrawn. British merchants at Rangoon were oppressed and the British Flag insulted. A Commodore of the British squadron on the Irrawaddy seized a Burmese vessel and blocked the mouth of the Irrawaddy. There was some cannonading on both sides. Though Dalhousie did not approve of the precipitate manner of the Commodore he thought it necessary to declare war for the preservation of British prestige.

It was a brief war and lasted from April to December 1852. But it was decisive. The British had learnt the lessons of their first campaign

in Burma. The Burmese were defeated in every encounter. Rangoon, Martaban and Bassein were occupied as also Pegu. Dalhousie annexed by proclamation. Hostilities ceased when King Mindon who succeeded King Pagan restored friendly relations. Rangoon, Prome and Pegu now formed a part of the British Indian Empire.

Annexations: It has already been pointed out that the great defect of the subsidiary system was that it failed to maintain a minimum standard of administration. After the treaty of 1801 the condition of Oudh rapidly became worse. British troops protected the King. He had only to satisfy the Resident. Repeated reprimands by successive Governors-General were not of any use. Lord William Bentinck threatend to take the administration in British hands. He had taken the title of King under the orders of Lord Hastings to prove the disappearance of Mughal sovereignty. But that had made no difference in his attitude towards administration. Lord Auckland had at one stage wanted to make him sink into the position of a mere pensionholder but the Court of Directors did not agree. This growing misgovernment could have been remedied by Sleeman who had suggested a scheme for reforming the administration. He was prepared to undertake the responsibility, the labour and the risk. But the evils were allowed to grow. Dalhousie now suggested three schemes. The King of Oudh should make over his kingdom for a limited period. He might maintain his royal status and the administration should be taken over permanently by the Company. A third alternative was direct annexation. The Court of Directors decided to annex Oudh directly to the British Dominions. Orders were issued for annexation and Oudh was made a British province by a proclamation in February 1856.

Other annexations of Dalhousie concerned smaller states. The doctrine that was propounded is known as the *Doctrine of Lapse*. According to Hindu law a Hindu might adopt a son on the failure of natural heirs. The law made no distinction between a natural and an adopted son. During the long period of Muslim rule this Hindu law of adoption was recognised. This custom was continued during the British rule in its early years. But in 1834 the Court of Directors, in an expansionist mood, wanted to make this indulgence an exception and not the rule. Under Dalhousie this policy was carried into practice. The first state to be annexed was Satara. After the abolition of Peshwaship this principality was brought into existence by Lord Hastings in 1818. The Raja of Satara represented the family of

Shivaji. As he had no issue he adopted a son, but after his death the adoption was declared invalid and the state was annexed. In the state of Karauli the Raja adopted an heir before his death. But Dalhousie terminated its separate existence on the basis of his Doctrine of Lapse. But the Court of Directors thought that it was one of the oldest of the Rajput States and its annexation might alarm the whole of Rajputana. Sambalpur in the Central Province was next annexed, because the Raja died childless. Then came the historic case of Jhansi. Its ruler died after adopting a son. According to Dalhousie adoption was not valid for the transfer of the principality but only for the conveyance of private rights. Even Jhansi temple property was affected by this annexation. Among other annexations special mention should be made of Nagpur which was taken in 1853. Berar was taken from the Nizam not under the Doctrine of Lapse but in lieu of payment of arrears and as security for future payment of the subsidiary force. A very extensive cotton producing country was thus acquired.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION—CHARTER ACTS —OTHER CHANGES

The Charter Act of 1813: There was some searching enquiry before the renewal of the Company's Charter. A House of Commons committee appointed in 1808 submitted the celebrated Fifth Report in 1812. It is the standard authority on the judicial and police systems and on land tenure of those days. There was a distinct avowal of the sovereignty of the British Crown in India. But the Act left the Government of India in the hands of the Company for another period of twenty years. The Company's monopoly of Indian trade was abolished, but its monopoly of China trade was continued. The commercial and territorial accounts of the Company were to be kept apart. The opening of private trade in 1813 marks the beginning of a new chapter in India's economic history. The college at Haileybury which was opened in 1805 for the training of the Company's civil servants and the seminary at Addiscombe for the training of the Company's military servants were to be continued under the Board of Control. The Company retained its patronage, but the crown was to approve the appointments of Governor-General, Governors and Commanders-in-Chief. The Christian missionaries secured admission and there was to be a bishop of Calcutta and three archdeacons of the Church of England in India. The Act set aside a *lakh* of rupees each year for the revival and improvement of literature and promotion of a knowledge of science among the inhabitants of British territories in India.

The Charter Act of 1833: According to this Act the Company disappeared as a trading body. It became a political agent for the Crown. Its territorial possessions were continued for twenty years but 'in trust for his Majesty, his heirs and successors'. Its debts were charged on Indian revenues. In compensation for its surrender of its privileges, the Company was granted an annuity of £630,000, a charge on India. The Government of India was centralized. The superintendence, direction and control of the whole civil and military government of all the territories and revenues of India were vested in the Governor-General of India in Council. The Governor-General of Bengal became the Governor-General of India and the Council at Fort William became the Council of the Governor-General of India.

The number of members of this Council was fixed at four, one for legislation only, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal army being an extraordinary member. Each subordinate Presidency was to be administered by a Governor and not more than three Councillors. The Governor-General in Council with the Law Member could legislate for all persons and all courts. But its laws and regulations were to be laid before the British Parliament.

Clause 87 of the Charter Act runs thus: 'No native of the said territories, nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said company.' Indian public opinion, as it became articulate, demanded its implementation, regarded it as a fundamental principle, more or less in the same manner as the English came to regard the constitutional clauses of the Magna Carta. But nothing was done to repeal the provision of the Act of 1793 which excluded any but covenanted servants from occupying places worth more than £500 a year. The Duke of Wellington is reported to have remarked: 'Why was this declaration made in the face of a regulation preventing its being carried into effect? It was a mere deception.' The Act of 1833 did nothing to modify the force of former statutes. Clause 87 was virtually nullified.

The Charter Act of 1853: By this Charter Act the Company continued in trust for the Crown until Parliament should otherwise direct. The number of Directors was reduced from 24 to 18, six being nominees of the Crown. The position of the President of the Board of Control was equalised with that of a Secretary of State. Patronage was taken away from the Directors and competitive examination was substituted, open to British subjects. The legislative member was accorded full rank. For purposes of legislation the Council was to consist of Governor-General, four members of the Council, the Commander-in-Chief, a representative of each Presidency or Lieutenant Governor, selected from senior civilians by the head of the local Government, the Chief Justice of Bengal and another Supreme Court Judge. The deliberations of the Council were to be public. This Council could not play any very effective part.

Evolution of the Structure of Government—The Company's Civil Service: During the period of Company's rule the functions of government were simple—collection of revenue and general administration. The district was the basis of administration from 1786 and the collector

was at first in charge of revenue, justice and police. Revenue and judicial functions were next separated—police, civil justice and criminal justice being vested in the Judge-Magistrate, the collector being in charge only of revenue administration. In 1831 only civil judicial duties were entrusted to the judge and the collector became also Magistrate and Chief Executive Officer of the district. The Civil Judge was also entrusted with the administration of higher criminal justice. The post of Divisional Commissioner to supervise the work of the two district officers had been created in 1829. In 1838 further separation of powers took place and between 1838 and 1859 there were in districts three officers—District Magistrate, District Collector and District Judge. Thereafter a reunion of the offices of the Collector and Magistrate was brought about. 'These two district officers became the chief instrument of British administration.'

The Haileybury College in England, founded in 1805, where recruits to Company's civil service spent four terms, helped to develop a competent civil service in India. Under the patronage system the civil servants of the Company were nominated by individual Directors. Membership of the civil service was almost exclusively confined to Anglo-Indian families in England and Scotland. The Fort William College in Calcutta, founded by Lord Wellesley, was reduced by the Court of Directors to the status of a local seminary for teaching some oriental languages. The Haileybury College helped to set up some healthy traditions for the civil servants of the Company. But the members also developed the outlook of a governing corporation. In 1853 the principle of open literary competition for Indian Civil Service recruitment was accepted and the provision for competitive examination was embodied in the Government of India Act 1853, the first competitive examination being held in 1855. The Haileybury College disappeared as a seminary for the training of civil servants.

The Cornwallis system of administration was calculated to secure efficiency by excluding Indians from responsible public employment. Even such a person of transcendent ability as Ram Mohan Roy could only became the *dewan* to a collector. Indians were merely copying clerks. But administrative efficiency could not thus be ensured. The lowest judicial offices of *Munsiff* and *Sadar Amins* were filled up by Indians. Under Bentinck Indian judicial officers were entrusted with greater responsibility. In 1831 a new class of judicial officers, the principal Sadar Amins, were recruited from Sadar Amins. In spite of the generous sentiment expressed by the Act of 1833 exclusion of

Indians from higher employment was continued. Though no one was admitted to the covenanted civil service the office of Deputy Collector was created in 1833 and that of Deputy Magistrate in 1843. These offices, though of a subordinate character, demanded ability and intelligence. At the time of the renewal of the Charter in 1853 it was contended that Indian talent was suited only to judicial work though the general trend of evidence in Parliament was that Indians should be admitted to superior offices in the civil line. But it was decided that civil service examinations should be held only in London. This set the greatest obstacle to the admission of Indians to the competitive examination though with the spread of western education, Indians were eager to compete for the Indian Civil Service.

Economic Changes—Indian Industries in Pre-British Days: India was the greatest workshop of cotton manufacture for the world from immemorial times. Dacca was the Manchester of India, Dacca muslin being renowned all over the world for its beauty and firm texture. Cotton and silk piece-goods, raw silk, saltpetre and opium formed India's chief articles of export. There was a happy blending of agriculture and handicrafts. According to Verelst, who succeeded Clive as Governor of Bengal, the customs office books at Murshidabad, even in Alivardi's time, showed an entry of seventy *lakhs* in raw silk. This was exclusive of European 'investment' which was not registered at Murshidabad and which was either duty-free or paid duty at Hooghly. Verelst wrote: 'The farmer was easy, the artisan encouraged, the merchant enriched and the prince satisfied.'

Ruin of Indian Industries: This aspect of affairs changed after the battle of Plassey. Large sums flowed into England from organised looting in India. But we have not much evidence to prove that the plunder of India flowed directly into British industry. It is not possible to trace connections so directly. But, as it has been said, it is even more difficult to believe that there is no connection between the two. Much of it was spent in conspicuous consumption and in securing immunity for the plunderers. Moreover, in Bengal the British merchants became unfairly supreme in inland as also in export trade. The manufacture of silk and cotton goods began to decline. As early as 1769 the Directors wanted the manufacture of raw silk to be encouraged in Bengal and that of silk fabrics discouraged. Over cotton goods and raw silk the Company established a quasi-monopolistic control. The story of oppression is supported by official records. The winders of raw silk cut off their thumbs in order to escape

compulsory winding of silk. Oppression proved destructive to the industry.

By the Parliamentary enactments of 1700 and 1720 cotton and silk goods imported from India 'could not be worn or otherwise used in England'. They were exported to other countries in Europe. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars closed the market. The importation of printed cotton goods from India to England, which had continued up to this time, was also stopped. In the meantime the Industrial Revolution placed England in a position of great advantage. The first sample of English muslin was sent to Bengal in 1783. The Company could not afford to antagonise British manufacturing interests by restricting the import of British cotton goods to India. Invidious duties further discouraged and repressed Indian industries. Textile industry became practically extinct. Ship-building industry was revived in Bengal in 1781. Even in 1795-96 six ships were built in Calcutta. In 1797-98 several ships were launched from her dock-yards. But ship-building was entirely given up in Calcutta. A ban on Indian shipping in Indo-British trade was imposed in 1814. About 1788 the adoption of this new policy is easily discernible. The export of raw materials was encouraged because such a policy would be popular in England. The production of raw materials for British industries, particularly raw silk and indigo, was encouraged.

Ruin of Indian Trade: Indigo became the principal article of export to England. Between 1826 and 1830 an average of about 118,000 maunds were exported from Bengal and Bihar. The indigo planters developed very unhappy relations with Indian labour. For more than half a century oppression and lawlessness remained associated with indigo cultivation. The East India Company confined itself to the production of opium in Bihar. But the sale of opium in China was confined to private British traders. The China trade became a channel of remittance from Calcutta to London via Canton.

The course of Indo-British trade was very unfair. In 1834 the export of British cotton goods to India was more than 54,000,000 yards whereas in 1824 it was hardly more than 1,000,000 yards. Indian piece-goods also lost their home market very rapidly in an unequal struggle. There was the anomaly of British goods enjoying a preference in the Indian market. Thus took place an economic revolution, a displacement in which weavers, spinners, dyers, bleachers, cotton producers, needle workers became all affected. Their sufferings were without any parallel in the history of commerce. The entire economic

basis of Indian life was blown up and India became the agriculture farm of England.

India became the major consumer of the products of Britain's textile industry. Britain's attitude to India was for the rest of the nineteenth century governed by the supreme importance of this trade. Cottons amounted to over one half of all exports from England to India.

Administrative and Social Reforms: In the days of Bentinck there were 416 European covenanted servants. Their emoluments amounted to 90 *lakhs*. Even Europeanisation of the judicial service was complete under the system of Cornwallis. Bentinck was responsible for more extended use of Indian agency. Indian judicial officers were entrusted with greater responsibility. Subordinate judicial service was thrown open to Indians and integrity was sought to be assured by the payment of slightly higher fixed salary. The large scale employment of uncovenanted and Indian agency was thus begun in 1831. Another problem was not, however, faced—the ridiculously low salary scale of the subordinate Indian employees in the police, land revenue, salt and opium departments and in the clerical establishments of law courts. Corruption was the fruit of a totally inadequate salary combined with temptation. An attempt was only made to restrain corruption so far as to prevent any injury to the interests of the government. The highly paid European worked with low paid Indian agents and though he could not work without this agency he wondered why it was corrupt. One of the most important reforms was that vernacular replaced Persian as the language of the law courts. English was substituted for Persian as the official language of government business. Bentinck's economies in the civil and military service should be regarded as a considerable achievement.

But Bentinck is famous in Indian history for his social reforms. He found himself in a very congenial atmosphere. Indians were startled by the strength of the West. But the Indian past is no blank page. It is like an illuminated manuscript partly worn away. There were fantastic perversions of Hinduism. The abuses that cried for suppression —*Thagi*, *Sati*, infanticide, *Kulin* polygamy did not penetrate society to its core. 'There was however much wood that was dead and diseased that had to be cleared away.' Social reform awakened interest in Indian mind. There was a re-reading of orthodoxy, a rediscovery of essentials. Protest against the bondage of mediaeval religion, social and sacerdotal laws and institutions became very

active. Ram Mohan Roy stands as the embodiment of India's response to this western challenge. But in the history of British connection with India during these years we can trace many strands of character and motive. Carey, who came to India in defiance of the East India Companys' ban, stands in a class by himself as one of the most potent influences in the moral and intellectual advancement of India. Carey, Marshman and Ward started their great work for education at Serampore. Their Bengali organ *Samachar Darpan* (1818-1841) exercised a very healthy influence on the Indian mind. The tone of the articles indicated the existence in the Anglo-Indian society of a spirit which very soon passed away. But Serampore remained redolent with the fragrance of their memory.

During an era of troubles following the dissolution of an empire, groups of robbers and ritual murderers had formed a brotherhood in Central and Northern India. Colonel Sleeman began a drive against them in 1830 and succeeded in crushing them with surprising efficiency. The practice of ritual child sacrifice in the Saugar island was also stopped. Popular imagination remembers Bentinck as the Governor-General who was responsible for the abolition of *Sati* or widow burning in 1829. How did this practice develop?

Among the fungoid growths of Hinduism the most noticeable was *Sati*. The origin of *Sati* will most probably be found in the voluntary sacrifice of the widow who became inconsolable for the loss of her husband. Foolish enthusiasm of feebler minds led to the extension of the practice. The *Pandit* of the Supreme Court said, 'Few instances are to be found in the Puranas.... the act of dying is not enjoined.' But the official list of *Sati* makes instructive reading. In 1815 there were 253 *Sati* in the Calcutta Division, 31 in Dacca. In 1826 there were 398 in the Calcutta Division and 101 in Dacca. The *Dayabhag* law of succession which prevailed in Bengal ensured to the widow the right to the deceased husband's property during her lifetime. This was perhaps to some extent responsible for this growing iniquity. One is reminded of the circumstances in Maharastra which led to pressure being put on Sakwar Bai on the death of Raja Sahu in 1749, because the Peshwa felt that she might embroil the Maratha nation in a civil war and therefore insisted on her becoming a *Sati* as a childless widow. Grant Duff refers to this 'calm villainy of a Brahmin Court'. Villainy was also here at work. A social abuse under the cloak of religion proved to be very useful to the heirs of the deceased. Marshman told Bishop Heber in 1824: 'These horrors are of more

frequent occurrence within these few last years than when he first knew Bengal.' Indians first learnt in the law courts 'the low arts of chicanery, imposture and litigiousness—they did not imbibe any elements of European character. Only the mildness and simplicity of their own character were undermined.' This would explain why the abuse increased so much in Calcutta and Dacca and the surrounding areas in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The attempts of the government to regulate it only increased the practice.

Ram Mohan Roy began his campaign against this abuse. He was not successful. Superstition and corruption were both at work. He wrote tracts to prove that jealousy and superstition acted in defiance of the most sacred authorities. He submitted his views to Lord William Bentinck in a written form though he was not in favour of taking any official drastic step. Bentinck took courage in both hands and ordered the abolition of *Sati* in December 1829.

Education: In India there was no dearth of elementary schools. Almost all villages had schools for teaching, reading, writing and arithmetic. They were more or less uniform throughout India. But the decline of learning was very much noticeable about the end of the eighteenth century. Besides these elementary schools there were colleges of Sanskrit learning and seminaries which taught Arabic and Persian. Elementary education was in a very low state. The Brahmins practically monopolised the whole of Sanskrit learning and the *moulavis* and *moulanas*, the Arabic and Persian lore. There were many Hindus who learnt Persian, because it was the language of law courts as also of administration. But the ancient learning of the East was reduced to memorising vast masses of ancient writings. The feeling that was uppermost in the Indian mind was that our forefathers had absorbed all wisdom, all judgement and all knowledge.

There was no cultural association between Indians and Englishmen until the eighties of the eighteenth century. The Calcutta Madrassa was founded by Warren Hastings in 1781 and Sanskrit College was founded at Banaras in 1792 on the advice of Jonathon Duncan who was Resident there. The foundation of the Asiatic Society in 1784 was a landmark in the cultural history of Asia. Indian names were not proposed until 1829. But there was a genuine spirit of research among members of the Asiatic Society in oriental literature, history, philosophy, etc. Indian intellectual renaissance owes much to the British atmosphere and example.

The Charter Act of 1813 set apart a sum of not less than one *lakh*

of rupees in each year for the revival and improvement of literature and encouragement of the learned 'natives' of India. But the advanced thinking members of the Hindu community of Calcutta with David Hare as the adviser and Edward Hyde East, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as their patron started an institution which became later the nucleus of a university. Two persons had originally initiated the scheme—Ram Mohan Roy and David Hare. The sponsors of the Hindu College wanted to give secular education to their children. The primary object was the tuition of the sons of respectable Hindus in the English and Indian languages in the literature and science of Europe and Asia. At that time Muslims were not interested in English education. Students also flocked in growing numbers to the English schools started by the missionaries. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland started a school in Calcutta. The taste for English education became more and more widely disseminated. This was the state of things which prompted Macaulay to assert in 1835 that the state of the market was the decisive test. But 'the dictum that India owes western education to Macaulay requires a good deal of qualification.' The tide had already set in strongly in favour of western education. Ram Mohan Roy wrote a remarkable letter to Lord Amherst in which he protested against the governmental plan for the foundation of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta. He wrote: 'We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy and other useful sciences.' Ram Mohan Roy was one of the earliest advocates of English education who demanded it for the intellectual advancement of his countrymen. There were many other eminent Indians who were in agreement with him. There was a General Committee of Public Instruction in which there were two groups of European members—Orientalists and Anglicists. Ultra-anglicism was pitted against ultra-orientalism. The Orientalists were in favour of Sanskrit and Arabic studies. As there was a stalemate the matter was referred to the Governor-General's Council. As a member of the Governor-General's Council Macaulay submitted a minute in February 1835. It took the form of a government resolution which declared in favour of western education. This is regarded as a landmark in the history of the country. It must be regarded as a tribute to the foresight of the founders of the Hindu College. English education was already an established institution in Bengal and to some

extent in Bombay and was on the way to its introduction in Madras. Bentinck had already substituted English for Persian as the language of official correspondence with country powers and native states. There was general introduction of English education as the medium of judicial business. The Anglicists had already triumphed in the committee on medical education. The inclination of state influence was already apparent. Macaulay's energetic rhetoric gave it an aggressive form which it would not have otherwise taken. He insisted on 'English education alone'. It has been said that Macaulay's minute stands out as a curious monument to the total lack of the historical mind in one who has been labelled a historian. But it ended indecision. Lord Auckland interpreted Bentinck's resolution as a mediator. The grants enjoyed by the oriental colleges were ordered to be restored. At the same time additional funds were provided for English education.

Persian rapidly melted away like snow. English schools multiplied quickly. Their number trebled in the next five years. Western education was an intoxicant for a few years but it very soon became a nourishment. Growing self-respect contained within itself the seeds of nationalism. It should not also be forgotten that nationalism is the natural religion of secularism. The public mind expanded.

The place of Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, in the history of western education in India is, according to popular imagination, second only to that of Macaulay. But Dalhousie appears to have been a greater enthusiast. When it was proposed to set up universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, Wood regarded Calcutta as a dangerous spot for higher education, not so Madras and Bombay. He wrote to Dalhousie: 'These highly educated natives are likely to be very disgruntled persons...future detractors, opponents and grumblers.' He could not refuse Dalhousie his request for a university in Calcutta while Bombay and Madras were each to get one. But he insisted on higher education being mainly supported by those who were anxious for it. In other words he wanted to have impoverished universities without government aid. But Wood is remembered for his introduction of the system of grant-in-aid for schools. The great merit of the Education Despatch of 1854 for which so much credit goes to Sir Charles Wood was to a large extent the work of Alexander Duff and C. H. Cameron. It was a triumph of constructive legislation. It formulated 'a properly articulated system of education from the primary school to the university'.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

THE MUTINY AND THE REVOLT OF 1857

Mutinies Before the Mutiny: The outbreak, described as the Mutiny of 1857, began suddenly at Meerut on 10 May. Rumblings of discontent in the army were noticed from January 1857 when the new Enfield rifles with greased cartridges were refused by sepoys at Dum Dum near Calcutta. In March 1857 a regiment of sepoys was disbanded at Barrackpore, near Calcutta, on account of mutinous behaviour. There were mutinies of sepoys before 1857. In 1806 sepoys at Vellore resisted certain new army regulations which insisted on a novel pattern of turban and the removal of caste marks on the forehead. They massacred some European troops and officers. But this mutiny was very easily suppressed. In 1824 sepoys at Barrackpore refused to go to Burma for fear of losing their caste. In 1844 some regiments refused to march into Sind. Their ring-leaders were punished and a regiment was disbanded. In a similar manner there were civil disturbances here and there, mainly caused by administration and land revenue innovations. But they were mostly of a minor nature and no such civil disturbance reached dangerous proportions. Nothing very serious had happened during half a century to prepare the British for a widespread violent uprising.

The suddenness of the mutiny on an extensive scale took everybody by surprise. But there was definitely no deliberate large scale conspiracy and no prior preparation. It was a spontaneous outburst. The risings were uncoordinated and isolated. Like a contagion it spread till it became the most widespread uprising in British Indian history.

Beginning: On 10 May 1857 there was in Meerut a protest against greased cartridges suspected by some to be smeared with the fat of cows and pigs. But the Meerut outbreak was not shortlived, because there was deep-rooted distrust and disaffection among sepoys. The Bengal army alone was involved in the mutiny. It comprised 150,000 men of whom 23,000 were Europeans. But between Agra and Barrackpore there was no European regiment except one stationed at Danapore. This might have emboldened the sepoys to a very considerable extent. The overwhelming proportions of these troops were Brahmins and other high caste Hindus and nearly one-third of them came from Oudh. Thus there was a network through which rumours might

spread. They had won many victories for the British and they were naturally inclined to exaggerate their role. They had many specific grievances regarding pay, pension rights, terms of service, etc. The General Enlistment Act of 1856 required every recruit to serve whenever required and not only in India. Such grievances had been accumulating but the sum total could not have been sufficient to produce such an uprising. S: N. Sen has pointed out that about 30,000 sepoys remained loyal to the end. About 30,000 were disarmed or deserted and only 70,000 were involved in the mutiny at different times. If they had simultaneously risen the mutiny might have been a much more dangerous threat to the British. Like an irresistible torrent it might have swept the British into the sea.

Duration: The Meerut rebels captured Delhi on 12 May and they had a long respite until 8 June. The aged Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah, an octogenarian, had to assume leadership under rebel pressure. The British took some time to collect their forces and the first battle took place on 7 June at Badliki Serai, 8 kilometres from Delhi, in which the rebels were defeated. The British now established themselves on the ridge which formed the outer rampart of Delhi. The siege of Delhi by the British lasted up to 20 September, when the city fell into British hands. The revolt in Rohilkhand started in May, the Kanpur outbreak on 4 June. Nana Saheb, adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II, was proclaimed *Peshwa*. Lucknow insurrection started on 30 May. By the end of June there was not a district in Oudh which was not in the hands of the rebels. Birjis Qadir, the eleven-year old son of the deposed Oudh King Wajid Ali, was proclaimed *Wali* under the regency of his mother Hasrat Mahal. In Lucknow the struggle for the Residency began about the middle of June 1857 and continued with varying fortunes till finally relieved on 21 March 1858. The British who were besieged in Kanpur on 4 June 1857 surrendered after three weeks' siege and all captives were massacred. There were risings also in Indore, Gwalior, Jhansi as also in the districts of Western Bihar. The mutiny became merged in a popular revolt in all these areas. Muslims and Hindus made a common cause. The Punjab, Bengal and Southern India were not affected by the revolt. Beginning at Meerut on 10 May 1857 the revolt ended in April 1859 with the capture and execution of Tatia Tope.

Causes: What were the causes of this revolt? Why were the mutineers joined by the landed aristocrats as also by the civil population in the extensive area from Meerut to Shahbad, as also in Jhansi and

Gwalior? Some of the causes of the terrible crisis are to be sought in the revolutionary social changes of the last three years. Personal ambitions, selfish motives operate in every movement in history. But it would be wrong to describe the rebel leaders as a mere medley of aggrieved persons. So long as there was a common enemy to fight against, there was very little scope for personal ambition. What would have happened if they were victorious is a different matter.

How did the British succeed in deeply provoking all classes of people in the extensive area from Meerut to Shahbad and in Jhansi and Gwalior? Even when there was no open rebellion few Indians would suppress a wish to see the British humiliated to some extent. In Canning's first proclamation only six *talukdars* of Oudh were listed as friendly. The rest were to lose all their ancestral lands for taking some part in the uprising. The *talukdars* of Oudh like zamindars in Bengal were intermediaries. They had become very powerful during the anarchy of the eighteenth century. In the early years of British administration the British had made settlements with the *talukdars* because the Sikhs and Marathas were still to be feared. But between 1819 and 1822 the *talukdari* settlement was replaced by a detailed field survey settlement. Under this settlement established by Holt Mackenzie, Bird and Thomason, village communities were to become proprietors and *talukdars* were set aside. Large estates were thus broken up. Old rights, almost forgotten, were revived. There was thus among these aristocrats in Oudh deep and abiding discontent. But were the cultivators, so long oppressed by their *talukdars*, so very happy under this new arrangement? It is relevant to note that one of the first acts of the rebels was to drive off the auction purchasers and to return to the traditional pattern of land holding. The peasants returned to their position as tenants and joined the *talukdars* to fight against the British whom they regarded as the common enemy. The changes introduced in landholding were too rapid and sudden. In 1853 as many as 110,000 acres in what was then called North-Western Province were under hammer. The land-owner who escaped sale fell into the clutches of the local *bania*. Usurious money-lending was regarded as a consequence of the new order. It introduced an element of torture in rural history and the odium naturally attached to the British system of administration. The judicial system which was introduced favoured the money-lenders. These were very acute realities. Even the lowest social grade was thus adversely affected. Wajid Ali, the deposed ruler of Oudh, who was

always surrounded by eunuchs and singers, was not a person for whom people would rise up in arms. But over 40,000 soldiers and retainers of the King of Oudh, now unemployed, were let loose upon the country. The British administrators did not know that the art of administration can be effective only in the context of existing circumstances. It was a case of over-government. In the affected areas there was perhaps the greatest estrangement between the rulers and the ruled.

The placing of Mysore under British rule, the annexations of Coorg, the Punjab, Oudh and of seven states in seven years by the Doctrine of Lapse sent a shiver of apprehension through the minds of all chieftains. The plight of the dispossessed *talukdars* of Oudh found a responsive chord among the common people. It was overlooked that feudal attachment was in those days almost as real as devotion to caste and religion. The shock that the British gave to Hindu superstition by various social reforms did not create as much discontent as the pervasive evangelical atmosphere. Colonel Wheeler at Barrackpore openly preached gospel to all classes of sepoys. There were other missionary colonels. The greased cartridge only reinforced the suspicion that the British were out to convert the people to Christianity.

Areas affected: The Delhi Monarch Bahadur Shah suddenly found the Meerut rebels at the city gates. He did not know that one of the gates was thrown open. There were no European troops in the city. The cantonment was at a considerable distance. The predatory tribes, the Gurjars, the Mewatis and those in the outskirts of the city, found an opportunity for robbing. The sepoys also plundered the city. Bahadur Shah was proclaimed Emperor. The old infirm Emperor had to resign himself to the inevitable. The British had some time before announced that the Imperial title would end with Bahadur Shah, the Imperial family would be removed from the Red Fort, symbol of Mughal sovereignty, to a new habitation at some distance. Some naturally thought that here was an opportunity of reviving the old glories of the house. This old, almost infirm, Emperor was suddenly called upon to defend the city against the British when they besieged it and established themselves on the outer ramparts of Delhi. The route from Meerut to Delhi was kept open for the British by the Rajas of Patiala and Jind and the Nawab of Karnal. Thus the British could keep open their communication with their base at Ambala. Their siege of Delhi continued. One aspect of the conduct

of the besieged deserves particular mention. On the *Id* day Bahadur Shah ordered that no cows were to be killed within the city during the festival of the *Id* and if any Muhammedan should do so he would be blown away from a gun. Bahadur Shah himself set an example by sacrificing a sheep at the *Idgah*. The besiegers were reinforced and succeeded at last in their assault on the 13th of September. On the British side 3,857 were either killed or wounded. The rebel strength was 40,000 at the time of the assault, including Ghazis and Jehadis. The British were very well served by their mercenaries —Sikhs and Gurkhas. It would not be inappropriate to point out that of 11,200 effective troops of the besiegers, 7,900 were Indians. Bahadur Shah became a state prisoner and 21 princes of the Imperial family were hanged. Though death was the fate of every sepoy, even *banias* and *kayasths* were not spared. The loot of Delhi according to an intelligent Assistant Surgeon present there was so much that he commented: 'I fancy every officer present at the siege might be able to retire at once.' The Urdu poet Ghalib wrote: 'Here there is a vast ocean of blood before us. Perhaps none is left to shed tears on my death.'

Kanpur: The mutiny at Kanpur was precipitated by the news from Meerut and Delhi. In Kanpur there was a large European and Christian population. Mutiny among the sepoys broke out on the 4th of June. According to Tatia Tope, a follower of Nana Saheb, Nana was forced under duress to assume the leadership. His retainers numbered only 300. The rebel sepoys numbered 3,000. There were only 300 Europeans and Nana was far away from Maharashtra. He might have succumbed to threat, to temptation, or to both. He was proclaimed Peshwa. No one was perhaps more unfit for this role. Wheeler, who was in command of Europeans and sepoys, entrenched the brick-built barrack as a temporary shelter. 50 per cent of those who assembled in the barracks were women and children. They defended for three weeks. Relief should have reached from Calcutta by that time. As provisions were exhausted they surrendered. The terms offered by Nana in an unsigned letter were thus worded: 'All those who were in no way connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie and were willing to lay down their arms. . .safe passage to Allahabad.' Wheeler accepted these terms. Elaborate arrangements were made. Forty boats were ready to convey them. But as they were going to embark, fire was opened on them from ambushed guns. Only three boats succeeded in getting away. Who were the brutal projectors of

this massacre at Satichauraghat? Nana Saheb has naturally been held guilty. But he did not certainly possess the master mind which could plan on this scale. It should also be noted that this massacre followed and did not precede Neill's brutalities at Allahabad. Was it a reply to these brutalities?

Neill was sent from Calcutta to reinforce Kanpur and Lucknow. He arrived at Banaras on 3 June. He should have dashed to Kanpur. He arrived at Allahabad on 11 June. His manner of disarming sepoys was such that he even drove loyal sepoys to mutiny. To teach people a lesson in the might of British arms disaffected persons were hanged like pariah dogs. 'Even a month after, people could see only a row of gallows. Victims of their wild justice were strung up as though for pastime. This brutality very naturally had its repercussions. Sepoys at Allahabad, Fathepur, Faizabad and Jaunpur rebelled when they learnt how unsuspecting soldiers were dealt with by their officers. Neill's indiscriminate hanging had provoked so much anger that he could not get supplies and provisions. 'It was Neill's hand that signed in letters of blood the doom of Cawnpore.' Havelock who took over the command from Neill arrived at Kanpur on 17 July. The survivors of the ghastly massacre, women and children, were all massacred at Bibighar and their bodies were thrown into a well. For this massacre Nana had also been held guilty. His own explanation of this event deserves to be noted: 'By means of entreaties I saved the lives of 200 women and children. I have heard that they were killed by your sepoys and *badmashes* at the time that my soldiers fled from Cawnpore.' If Nana could plead duress no such claim could perhaps be made for Neill.

Lucknow: Henry Lawrence had time to complete his preparations for the defence of Lucknow throughout June, because the rebels were busy capturing civil and military stations in Oudh. He decided to stand a long and protracted siege at the Lucknow Residency. But he was killed by a chance shot on 2 July. During the long siege the sepoy leaders failed to take the place by repeated assaults. The besieged numbered about 3,000 of whom 1,720 were combatants and 1,280 non-combatants. Indians numbered about 50 per cent of the total number of fighting men. The strength of the besieging force has been variously estimated at twenty to forty thousand. With his small number of soldiers Havelock twice defeated the besiegers on the Lucknow road but he had to fall back, because his troops were not sufficient in number to relieve Lucknow. The second retreat of Have-

lock determined the attitude of the *talukdars* of Oudh. They could no longer withhold their support for the *Wali* and sent their levies to Lucknow. They were ill-armed, ill-trained, ill-disciplined contingents. Some of these troops would disappear at the sowing or reaping season. Lucknow was relieved by Colin Campbell on 17 November. Thus the British succeeded in reopening communications between Bengal and the Punjab, Calcutta and Lahore. But the recovery of Oudh took a long time. Jung Bahadur from Nepal came with a contingent of 10,000 to help the British. The rebels had no leadership and did not know how to harass the extended position of the British.

In Bihar, Kumar Singh, the Rajput zamindar of Jagdishpur and a septuagenarian, provided the rebel sepoys of Danapore the necessary leadership. He was a generous and popular landlord. Government had refused to take over the management of his heavily encumbered estates. The impending loss of his ancestral estates might or might not have motivated his rebellion. But when the sepoy rebels demanded his co-operation as their natural leader he had to agree. This was very natural under the circumstances. His movements showed unusual activity for his age. Driven out of Jagdishpur he went to Rohtas, thence to Rewa, marched to Mirzapore, Banda, Gwalior whence he returned to Jagdishpur where he died. The struggle was continued by his brother Amar Singh who later escaped to Nepalese Terai.

Jhansi was annexed in 1854 under the Doctrine of Lapse. The resumption of temple property was perhaps the worst aspect of this annexation. Rebellion broke out among the sepoys of Jhansi fort on 5 June and they massacred about fifty people. Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, had nothing to do with the mutiny and massacre. As in the case of Kumar Singh she was looked upon by the rebel sepoys as their natural leader and she had no option. She proved to be the most inspiring leader in this revolt. She was joined by Tatia Tope. Hugh Rose took the field against them. The revolt suddenly acquired the character of a war of movement. Lakshmi Bai had laid waste the land of Jhansi. But Sindhia and the Rani of Orcha sent supplies to the British commandant. Tatia Tope with 20,000 men appeared before Jhansi but was defeated. He withdrew to Kalpi but suddenly doubled back to Gwalior when the Gwalior troops declared in favour of the mutineers. Tatia was defeated in the battle there. Lakshmi Bai died a solider's death. But Tatia Tope carried on the unequal fight, moved to Tonk, Chandheri, Chhote Udaipur. He was joined by Shah-

zada Firoz Shah, a brave Mughal Prince. But they were hotly pursued and defeated in repeated engagements. Firoz Shah chose the life of an exile from India, dying in great penury later at Mecca. Tatia took shelter in the jungle of Paron where he was betrayed to the British by Man Singh who was supposed to be one of his trusted comrades. He was executed after a trial by court martial in April 1859. Nana Saheb escaped to Nepal where his whereabouts remained veiled in obscurity.

This story of the mutiny and revolt would remain incomplete without a reference to what happened at Ajnala in the early days of the mutiny. The Hindustani troops in the Punjab were easily disarmed at Mian Mir. Many left their barracks with the intention of going to Delhi. 282 men were captured in their flight and taken to Ajnala. 237 were shot dead and it was found that forty-five who were imprisoned had died of fright, fatigue and heat. Cooper, the hero of the massacre, wrote: 'Thus unconsciously the tragedy of Holwell's Blackhole was repeated.' In this sad history of the revolt if there were Satichaura, Bibighar and Jhansi, there were the barbarities of Neill, the Blackhole of Ajnala and the blood bath at Delhi. The story is bloody and brutal.

Causes of Failure: The rebels enjoyed extensive popular support in an extensive area. But how much was this popular support worth in the military sense without effective leadership? No sepoy even rose above the rank of a *subedar* or a *jamadar*. Could they possibly plan their operations successfully against Havelock, Outram, Rose or Campbell?

The rebels had no knowledge of British military strength and resources. At the siege of Lucknow they were fighting bullets of wood, pieces of iron, copper coins and bullock horns. 'Even these strange missiles sometimes found their mark.' S. N. Sen writes, 'If the Enfield rifle caused the mutiny, the Enfield helped to overthrow the mutineers.'

The rulers of Patiala, Jind and Karnal helped the besiegers of Delhi to maintain communication with their base at Ambala. Dinkar Rao succeeded in holding in check the army of Gwalior and when they revolted it was too late. The aristocracy of Bihar, the zamindars of Dumraon, Darbhanga and Hatya did not join the sepoys. Jung Bahadur's help was necessary in suppressing revolt in Gorakhpur and other regions. In Mathura and Aligarh the territorial magnates held down the tumultuous peasant revolts.

This uprising was an accumulated outburst of discontent. It was a

mutiny. It was a protest against administrative, economic and social dislocation, it was a protest also against Anglo-Saxon swaggering, haughty British superciliousness. John Lawrence understood the causes of this uprising better than any of his contemporaries. Three months before the mutiny he came to Oudh. He said, 'I saw anger in their eyes.' The British had to make a supreme effort. The suppression of this mutiny and revolt was actually a reconquest.

INDIA IN 1858

There was now peace 'from Adam's Bridge to Peshawar'. The Company's rule ended by the Government of India Act of 1858 and the powers exercised by the East India Company and the Board of Control were now to be exercised by the Secretary of State for India. He was to have a Council of fifteen members. They were appointed for ten years. The Secretary of State was given the power to act against the majority of the Council except in certain specified matters. He could even send orders to India without consulting the Council.

The control of Parliament against the Secretary of State became almost nominal. His party ensured him a steady majority. The old periodical enquiry by Parliament was gone. As G. K. Gokhale pointed out later, 'We have the disadvantages of parliamentary government without its advantages. The responsible opposition in the country abdicates its position in the case of India only.'

But the events of 1857 left racial bitterness as its legacy. It was a year of racial warfare. In an atmosphere of bitter racial hatred Canning refused to govern in anger. He was nicknamed by the British racists as 'Clemency Canning', because he had withdrawn from his Commissioner the power of punishing mutineers other than those charged with specific acts of rebellion or belonging to regiments who had murdered their officers. The proclamation which Canning had issued in 1858 of general confiscation of the property of all the *talukdars* was not withdrawn but he allowed the Commissioner of Oudh the power of returning the estates on submission. The government policy was one of supporting the well-established classes of society. One of the consequences of the mutiny was the restoration of the aristocracy, particularly in the area most affected by the revolt. The pre-mutiny land policy was definitely abandoned. In 1859 new *sanads* were given to *talukdars* by Canning in open *durbar*. The *talukdars* eventually emerged in a far stronger position than they had

held before. It was felt that this was necessary because the people had wilfully rejected the benefits which the British administration had conferred on them. Cornwallis had very much strengthened British regime in Bengal by establishing his permanent zamindari system. It was fondly hoped that superior landholding class would serve the same purpose in other parts of Northern and Central India. The revolt of 1857 ushered in a new era of prosperity for these propertied classes.

The Queen's Proclamation in 1858 was the most famous proclamation of [near] equality. The following principles were officially proclaimed:

1. We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native princes as our own.
2. None be anywise favoured, none molested or disqualified by reason of their religious faith and observances.
3. All shall alike enjoy the equal and important protection of the law.
4. *So far as may be* our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely admitted to offices in our service the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge.

This proclamation breathes generosity, benevolence and religious toleration. Thus commenced the Crown administration. The right of adoption was recognised and princely dynasties felt safe. In glowing terms solicitude was expressed for the positive welfare of the Indian citizens but in practice it proved to be solicitude of the state for its negative welfare in its three branches—defence, police and law courts. The government's aim, in the words of a distinguished Anglo-Indian administrator, was to 'collect the revenues of the country, to pay the establishment necessary to keep possession and get into debt to supply the deficiency'. The Queen's Proclamation reminds us of the words of Macaulay—'large promises, smooth excuses'. *So far as may be* was the most operative portion of the proclamation. Dadabhai Naoroji used to quote the Queen's Proclamation repeatedly as a Christian divine would quote the Bible. He had a touching faith in British promises.

The most lasting effect of the mutiny was on the Indian army. So far as the Indian army was concerned the Queen's Proclamation was a dead letter. The army was to be as little homogeneous as

possible. The *Purbias*, i.e. men from Oudh, were completely discarded. Recruits were drawn from the Punjab and Nepal and the theory of martial races was evolved and separate units were created on the basis of caste and community. Even many years after, no Indian was allowed to rise above the rank of a brigadier. The artillery was managed exclusively by Europeans. It was to British power in India 'what a channel fleet is to England'. The Indian army was to be composed of 140,000 Indian troops and 65,000 European troops. Before the mutiny there were 238,000 Indian troops and 45,000 Europeans. The new policy was to segregate the army from the life of the nation.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

FOREIGN RELATIONS (1858-1905)

THE British Indian North-Western Frontier problem was made up of four subsidiary problems:

1. The international problem of the relations between India and Afghanistan.
2. The political problem, i.e. the problem of the control of the border tribes.
3. The problem of the military defence of the frontier.
4. The problem of the administration of the North-West Frontier.

In 1863 Dost Muhammad died after a long reign. He had sixteen sons and according to Afghan tradition there was succession troubles. Sir John Lawrence left the Afghans to settle their quarrels. His policy has been described as 'Masterly Inactivity'. It was to wait and see. When Sher Ali emerged as the victor, Lawrence recognised him as the ruler of Afghanistan. This was in 1868. Lawrence was opposed to any active British interference in the affairs of that country. About this time began what has been described as the Russian menace. But Lawrence was of the view that the best policy was to avoid entanglements at Kabul, Kandahar and other distant outposts and be ready for quick preparation for all contingencies. His successor Lord Mayo received Sher Ali in a famous *durbar* at Ambala. Mayo paid him the promised sum of £ 100,000, held before him prospects of future support, but did not promise any fixed subsidy but assured him that Afghan rebels would receive no support. There was no treaty but 'the most absolute present recognition'. The British Government would supply arms, money, ammunition, etc. whenever deemed necessary. Every frontier state should feel that the days of annexation were over. In 1869, after negotiations at St. Petersburg, the Oxus was fixed as the northern boundary of the Amir's dominions. Northbrook became Viceroy in 1872 and not long after, a period of high imperialism began in England after the fall of the Gladstone ministry. The Russians took Khiva in 1873. Lord Salisbury, the conservative Secretary of State for India, wanted the establishment of British agencies at Herat, Kandahar and finally at Kabul and he even wanted to induce the Amir to receive a British embassy in Kabul

but Northbrook would not depart from the policy established during the years 1858-76.

His successor was Lord Lytton. He was selected to carry out a policy which Northbrook had not agreed to carry out. Khiva was the last of the Khanates of Central Asia and the conservatives in England now tried to prepare for the eventuality of a war with Russia. What was known as the Forward School naturally got the upper hand. They wanted to conquer Afghanistan or partition it among different rulers. They were anxious to forestall Russian influence in Afghanistan. Quetta was annexed in 1877. This would enable a British army to operate on the flank and rear of any army attempting to proceed towards the Khyber and the Peshawar Valley. It was proposed to send a British army to Kabul. Sher Ali wrote in reply that the British should send an agent to let him know what was there 'in the generous heart of the English government'. Sher Ali politely declined to receive a temporary British mission which he knew would soon become permanent. The British now wanted that British officers should reside on the frontiers of Afghanistan. The government wanted an offensive and defensive alliance, recognise the chosen heir of the Amir and support him against domestic opposition. Sher Ali was not prepared to agree. Russians had in the meantime defeated the Turks near Constantinople. Disraeli landed Indian troops in Malta and occupied Cyprus. Russian reply was mobilisation of an army in Turkistan and the sending of a mission to Kabul. The Amir was unable to turn back the Russian mission and a draft treaty had to be drawn up. In the meantime peace in Europe had been established by the Congress of Berlin. The Russian mission also left Kabul. Normal relations should have been restored and no interference in Afghan affairs was necessary. But Lord Lytton was determined to send a British mission, because a Russian mission had come and gone. But the British mission was met on the way at Ali Masjid and after an abortive conference returned to Peshawar. This was regarded as a great offence and military operations were commenced. The history of the First Anglo-Afghan War seemed to be repeating itself. Lytton was determined not to allow Afghanistan to be a tool in the hands of Russia. This Second Anglo-Afghan War was thus precipitated by a pushing Viceroy with the Cabinet's full approval. The insult offered to Chamberlain's mission at Ali Masjid was to be avenged. The British public was told that Britain wanted a scientific frontier. It was new imperialism at its worst.

British troops advanced along three routes—the Khyber Pass, the Kurram Valley and the Bolan Pass. Sher Ali escaped to Turkistan where he died. Jalalabad and Kandahar were occupied. Sher Ali's son Yakub Ali signed the Treaty of Gandamak in May 1879 in which he assigned to the British Pishin, Sibi and Kurram though the places were not formally ceded to the British. Thus was Russian influence eliminated and a scientific frontier established. But as the Duke of Wellington had said, 'In Afghanistan when the military difficulties are over the real difficulties begin.' The Afghans behaved according to the old pattern. Louis Cavagnari and the members of the embassy at Kabul were massacred within less than three months. Yakub Ali was like Shah Shuja distrusted by the Afghans. He abdicated and joined the British camp.

The Second Afghan War began. The British under General Roberts pressed on to Kabul. He occupied it and many Afghans were executed. The conservative government in England fell and Lytton resigned. The new liberal government under Gladstone was installed. The Marquis of Ripon became the new Viceroy. Immediately after he took over, a British brigade was defeated at Maiwand but General Roberts marched from Kabul to Kandahar and totally defeated the Afghan army under Ayub Khan, a son of Sher Ali. The murder of Cavagnari and the defeat at Maiwand were thus avenged. The British fortunately found a very dependable ruler in the person of Abdur Rahman, nephew of Yakub. He was acceptable to the Afghans. He was recognised as the new Amir and the British withdrew from Afghanistan. India was involved in a loss of twenty million sterling. This unnecessary Afghan War only revealed how strong was Afghan spirit of independence. The Afghans were not friends of Russia or England and they could not be absorbed by one or other of the rival powers and would not be a tool in the hands of either. Ripon's policy secured Afghanistan's isolation from other foreign interests.

A minor later development should be noticed. A Russian general drove the Afghans from Panjdeh and threatened what is known as Zulfiqar Pass. There was a crisis. But Abdur Rahman was prepared to barter Panjdeh for the very much important Zulfiqar Pass. Lord Dufferin, Ripon's successor, later met the Afghan ruler at Rawalpindi and a boundary demarcation line was finally approved between India and Afghanistan and a treaty was concluded.

The other aspects of the frontier problem—control of the border tribes, military defence of the frontier and administration of the

frontier—were shaped anew by the British. The Mughals used to keep the passes open by means of subsidies. In that arid land this investment paid rich dividends. Punitive expeditions, blockades, etc could not keep this long tribal belt quiet. After Quetta was made a military base Robert Sandeman introduced a system of subsidies in return for certain duties and established personal relations with the chiefs and the tribal *jirgas*. But this policy was not applicable to the Peshawar, Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan region. Mortimer Durand persuaded the Amir of Afghanistan, in return for an increase of subsidy from 12 to 18 *lakhs*, to let the British control the Afridis, the Mahsuds, the Waziris, the Swat tribes, Chitral and Gilgit. This was the celebrated Durand Line. There was a Chitral campaign in 1895 and a general Pathan uprising in 1897 which was easily quelled. It was left to Lord Curzon to develop a new frontier administration. The British forces withdrew from their advance positions. Tribal forces were to be used for the defence of tribal territory. British forces were concentrated in British territory and communications were improved to facilitate their quick movement. Tribal levies called *Khassadars* were placed in charge of passes and tribal lands. British forces were placed in Peshawar and Kohat. Ultimately he created a separate North-Western Frontier Province. It contained the almost entire Pathan tribal area.

Amir Abdur Rahman Khan died in 1901. His son Habibullah succeeded. Amicable relations continued between Afghanistan and India. The old treaty was renewed. In the famous Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 Russia recognised that Afghanistan lay outside the sphere of her influence though the Amir refused formal recognition to the Convention.

There was a Third Afghan War in 1919. It was very short and swift. Peace was restored by the treaty of Rawalpindi in August 1919. An Afghan envoy was appointed in London and a British minister was appointed in Kabul.

Foreign Policy: In the story of British expansion in the East the next landmark was the annexation of Upper Burma. It has also an international setting. The French had succeeded in building up an empire in Indo-China. In the north-west the progress of Russia alarmed the British and this alarm shaped their policy. In the East the progress of France was regarded as a menace and it precipitated the Third Anglo-Burmese War. In 1885 was concluded a new Franco-Burmese treaty and the French appointed a consul. French influence

seemed to gain the upper hand. These treaties were only commercial agreements. But a sort of Monroe doctrine was applied by the British to Burma and no European power was to be allowed to secure financial and mercantile ascendancy there. Dufferin was a Gladstonian liberal and Salisbury, the Secretary of State, was a conservative. The British Government, which was very suspicious of the French, took alarm. These alarms were much increased when Thibaw, the young King of Burma, granted some further commercial concessions to a French company. There were disputes between a British commercial concern and the Burmese Government relating to some royalties. This led to war for which it was the most flimsy pretext. A British force occupied Mandalay. Thibaw surrendered. Upper Burma was annexed by Proclamation. Britain conquered a kingdom larger than Britain with the loss of a little over twenty men. This was in the style of Wellesley and Dalhousie. Dufferin was made the Marquis of Ava.

In foreign policy Lord Curzon's administration marks a new departure. He was an ardent imperialist with the highest notions of British power and prestige. Thirty years of imperialism which had begun with the proclamation of the Queen of England as the Empress of India in 1876 reached its climax during the administration of Curzon.

Curzon's attention was drawn quite early during his Viceroyalty to the Persian Gulf region. Britain's trade interest in this area dated from the seventeenth century and gradually it extended from Aden to the Persian Gulf. But other European powers also very soon became interested in this area. The French were prevented from getting a footing in Oman. Curzon is also credited with countering Russian influence in the north of Persia by strengthening British influence in the south.

In the north Curzon was interested in Tibet. The *Dalai Lama* was the head of the Buddhist monastic aristocracy which governed Tibet. He was regarded as an incarnation of Buddha. Certain signs which were discerned in an infant led to his proclamation as the ruler. There were therefore frequent minorities and regency councils. China enjoyed a nominal suzerainty over Tibet. Warren Hastings had first tried to establish contact with Tibet. China discouraged all direct contact. But the Chinese power was now on the decline. The Dalai Lama was no longer a minor. The Tibetans had invaded Sikkim in 1887 and were repulsed by the British. A trade agreement was concluded but it led to nothing. The Dalai Lama was eager to

shake off formal Chinese suzerainty. Dorjieff, who was a Russian subject by birth, led some Tibetan missions to Russia. England was very much suspicious of Russian intrigues in Asia and there were rumours of trade concessions to Russia. Curzon was permitted by the Cabinet to send a mission to Tibet. The Dalai Lama refused to treat with it. Younghusband, who led the mission, brushed the Tibetan mission aside and pushed on to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama fled. The Tibetan Council of Residency agreed to the setting up of a British Commercial Agency at Gyantse and to pay an indemnity. A British trade mission was established there. Russia's penetration on the borders of India—real or supposed—was thus resisted. Fortunately for the British there was no repetition of British adventure on the model of what had been done in Afghanistan. By the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 England and Russia agreed to conduct their political relations with Tibet through China. The Younghusband Mission did not lead to any result of political value.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

CONSTITUTIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC SET-UP (1858-1905)

THE Secretary of State took the place of the President of the Board of Control. His Council consisted of 15 members who held office for periods of ten to fifteen years. The majority of the members had to be qualified by ten years' residence or service in India. By the Act of 1869 the Councillors held office for a fixed term, renewable at the pleasure of the Secretary of State. The number was reduced to ten. The Secretary of State was the fountain of authority and policy. He could act against the majority of the Council except in certain specified matters. The Council sometimes prevented mischief but could not do any positive good. A report on moral and material progress in India was laid yearly before the parliament which led to a perfunctory debate in which a handful of members showed any interest. The Secretary of State was the Grand Mughal. The control of the parliament over the Secretary of State was nominal, because he had a standing majority behind him. Parliament was inclined to forget the existence of India except in times of crisis. Those members of parliament who paid any special attention to Indian questions were regarded as faddists.

The Councils Act of 1861 added a fifth member for finance to the Governor-General's Executive Council; a member for public works was added in 1874, who later came to be known as member for commerce and industry. The Governor-General had the power to overrule the Council majority if he thought that any measure affected the safety, tranquillity or interests of the British possessions in India. The Commander-in-Chief was an extraordinary member of the Council side by side with the military member. This military member was dispensed with in 1909 and his place was taken by a member for education in 1910. In 1909 for the first time an Indian member of the Executive Council, Mr. S. P. Sinha, was appointed.

By the Act of 1861 the Governor-General's Legislative Council was to be reinforced by not more than 12, not less than 6 members, half of whom were to be non-officials. Provincial Councils consisting partly of non-officials appointed by the government were also created. Bengal got a Provincial Legislative Council as early as 1862. Powers of the legislature were very limited, confined strictly to legislation

with no control over administration, finance and no right of interpellation. The Governor-General got a new power. He could issue on his own initiative ordinances which could remain in operation for six months. Madras and Bombay which had lost their legislative authority regained it. Legislative Councils were also established in the North-Western Province (U.P.) in 1886, in the Punjab in 1897. Some of the non-official nominees in these councils were Indians.

The relations between the centre and the provinces were characterised by the complete subordination of the provinces to the centre in administration, legislation and finance. There was very limited financial decentralisation. The local governments did not attempt any legislation without first consulting the Government of India which had to ascertain the views of the India Office. The legislatures were regarded as instruments for carrying out a centralised policy, the directives being issued by the Secretary of State.

The executive as also the legislative power in India under this system resided virtually in the hands of the Indian Civil Service subject to the authority of the Secretary of State and the Governor-General. The number of these British administrators was never more than three or four thousand. A handful of Indian civilians made no difference in the character of the bureaucracy. The Act of 1858 gave the Governor-General in Council, with the aid of the Civil Service Commissioners, the duty of fixing the conditions of admission by competitive examination. The maximum age of entry was twenty-two and required a year's probation in England. It was lowered to twenty-one in 1866 and two years' probation was required in England. With the racial bitterness created by the mutiny and the ruling bureaucracy there was a distinct hardening of the ruling race theory. Officialdom was divorced from generous ideas. The highest flood-level of British Indian bureaucracy was the first partition of Bengal.

RIPON AND CURZON

Most of the viceroyalties were in the existing circumstances colourless. John Lawrence has been described as a foreman awaiting orders. Canning's successors were without any sense of mission. Lord Northbrook was an exception. He did not carry out the unwise frontier policy which the British Cabinet wanted him to pursue. But the more important thing was that he would not accept the fiscal policy which the Secretary of State wanted to dicate in the interest of

Lancashire—the removal of import duty on cotton goods and the sacrifice of Indian revenue of more than £800,000 per annum because this was very much inconsistent with the interests of India. The relations between Salisbury and Northbrook best illustrate the ascendancy of the Secretary of State and his policy. Of course the personal equation at times reversed the effects of circumstances —the Viceroy sometimes exercising a semi-independent power. Two such Viceroys deserve special mention—Ripon and Curzon.

Lord Ripon was Viceroy of India from 1880 to 1884. His successful conclusion of the Second Anglo-Afghan War has already been referred to. His Factory Act of 1881 was passed with a view to regulating labour conditions in Indian factories. In spite of its insufficiency it was the first step taken in a good cause. He repealed the Vernacular Press Act passed by Lytton. Imperial interest might demand it, but Ripon, like Charles Metcalfe who had in 1835 taken this risk, had a firm faith in free press. Vernacular newspapers in the days of Lytton were subjected to serious restrictions. But it is significant that under the Act no prosecution had taken place and only two journals out of 230 had temporarily stopped publication. Ripon felt that the Act was not necessary and it was repealed. He received grateful thanks from all parts of the country.

The next important work of Ripon was the Local Self-Government Resolution of May 18, 1882. He wanted to give a broader base to British rule. Municipal institutions were in existence in many towns even before 1857 but the Commissioners were all government nominees. In 1870 Mayo extended local self-governing institutions. New municipalities were established to take care of local interests. But Ripon was in favour of a more forward liberal policy. He regarded it as the small beginning of an independent political life. Ripon's celebrated resolution was thus worded: 'It is not primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education.' District boards were formed like County Councils in England. Majority of the members were elected by the people. Some were nominated by the government. The district magistrate was the Chairman. Local boards were formed in subdivisions of districts and were placed under district boards. Most of the members were elected. In municipalities also the majority of the members were elected. Some were chosen. Some bigger municipalities chose their Chairman. By the end of 1884 local self-governing institutions

were spread over the whole of British India. The experiment was very much limited in operation and did not provide much political education. It did not contribute to any political progress. It was the Ilbert Bill which indirectly served this purpose.

Outside the Presidency towns a European could be tried for a criminal offence only by a European judge or magistrate. But some Indians had entered the Indian Civil Service and by now they had become sufficiently senior to rise to the rank of district magistrate or district and sessions judge. One of them—B. L. Gupta—pointed out that as Presidency Magistrate he had tried Europeans which he could not do when he reached a more responsible position in the mofussil. Government decided to remove this racial discrimination and a Bill was introduced to remove this anomaly by Ilbert, the law member, in 1883. There was a great uproar among Europeans. But the merchants at Calcutta and the planters of Bihar were not the only agitators. A European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association was formed. Bransen, a leading lawyer, prophesied civil war. There was opposition to this measure by the Lieutenant-Governor, most of the British civil servants, British judges of the Calcutta High Court. Even Mrs. Annette Beveridge, translator of the *Baburnama*, expressed her opposition to this measure. This shows the extent of racial opposition to 'an infinitesimal measure of relief from native disabilities'. The racial cleavage became wider than before. There was at last a compromise between the government and militant Europeans. A European in the mofussil on trial before an Indian magistrate or sessions judge was given the right to claim trial by jury of which half were to be Europeans. It has been said that this racial antipathy was the echo of the feelings aroused by the mutiny. But the Indians now learnt the power of organisation and agitation and this became one of their techniques in their coming political conflict. It was no accident that when the Europeans were celebrating their political success in Calcutta Indians in Calcutta convened their first national conference which was the precursor of the Indian National Congress.

Ripon was thus foiled in his very limited attempt to remove glaring racial inequality. But he was responsible for the first time in history for the appointment of an Indian officiating Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court for two months. He was also responsible for the lowering of salt duty by as much as 30 per cent in Bengal and 20 per cent elsewhere. Thus he introduced some decency in taxation which the Indians could not but appreciate. But this liberal phase of

administration ended very soon. He left India in 1884 on the crest of a tidal wave of Indian gratitude. This feeling found its expression in the words of W. C. Bonnerjee, the first President of the Indian National Congress. He said: 'The Congress policy was the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's memorable reign.'

The Ripon touch was a remarkable contrast to Curzonian superiority complex (1899-1905). Curzon's remarkable efficiency was misdirected and he offended beyond forgiveness the educated classes of India. It has been said that the Curzonian period was the greatest stimulant to the Congress before the fatal shooting at Amritsar. After two very unimaginative Viceroys—Lansdowne and Elgin—during whose regime all important decisions were taken in London—the bureaucracy reached its apotheosis in India. But when Curzon, the prancing proconsul, arrived in Calcutta, British policy was initiated not from Whitehall but from Calcutta and the bureaucracy also found a master who knew how to ensure efficiency. The new Viceroy's vigour 'successfully revived the old claims of the government of India to semi-independent power'. He consulted with the Secretary of State on equal terms. He no doubt gave the system of British administration a great impetus. But his measures, one after another, alienated Indian public opinion. His infamous Mackenzie Bill (1899) established complete official control over the Corporation of Calcutta. It was destructive of the spirit of municipal self-government which educated India had come to cherish. It ensured a standing majority to the official bloc in the interest of the British commercial community. By the Indian Universities' Bill European ascendancy was sought to be ensured in different universities, official and departmental interests and a working majority in favour of government views. The Sadler Commission reported in 1919: 'The Indian universities under this Act were the most complete governmental universities in the world.' In a convocation address delivered as the Chancellor of the University of Calcutta he said: 'I hope I am making no false or arrogant claim when I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent a western conception.' Educated India was shocked. No doubt Curzon had some very excellent ideas. His preservation of Ancient Monuments Act was the greatest service to archaeology and architecture. He was perhaps the first Viceroy who appreciated the importance of Hindi. But these not very conspicuous accomplishments could not possibly make people forget the Mackenzie Bill, the Universities' Bill, and the

insult he hurled at Indians assembled in a University Convocation Hall. But the climax of unpopularity was reached when he decided to partition Bengal. To him perhaps the partitioning of Bengal was at the beginning a measure of administrative reform. Bengal was considered to be too big a charge for a Lieutenant-Governor. But it is most likely that the official line of thinking was to destroy the unity of the Bengali people. 'Bengal divided will pull in different ways', wrote the Home Secretary. Curzon's greatest mistake was that he regarded the agitation as artificial and he thought that his officials were right. He made a tour of Eastern Bengal and was confirmed in his notion of giving unity to the Muhammedans of Eastern Bengal. This movement against the partition of Bengal in 1905 marks the beginning of the emotional aspect of the Indian political movement. Its weapon was *Swadeshi*. It was a protest against the conspiracy of modern trade. The lava-like flood of the *Swadeshi* movement fertilised the soil for the growth of the freedom movement. This partition of Bengal in 1905 stands now in history as an example of the extreme folly of officialdom which was out of touch with the realities of the situation.

Another feature of Curzon's administration is normally overlooked. An identification of interests of all classes of Englishmen in India was his constant endeavour. Few things are more remarkable than the sinister growth of commercial influence over the executive administration. He said to the tea planters in Assam in 1901 and followed this up with his speech at Barakar in 1903: 'I look upon all Englishmen in this country as engaged in different branches of the same great undertaking...my work lies in administration, yours in exploitation but both are aspects of the same question.'

It is no wonder that in spite of the fetish which he made of efficiency his Indian administration came to be considered as worse than even that of Lytton. The issue on which he resigned—his differences with Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief, on the selection of the Military Supply Member—was not so much a matter of principle as personal rivalry. Gokhale's comment on Lord Curzon was perhaps the most appropriate: 'Without a sympathetic imagination one cannot understand an alien people.' But the British system of administration had become petrified.

British Land Revenue Operations: R. C. Dutt has pointed out that two causes rapidly weakened the old village communities in India—the anxiety to increase the land revenue from the individual cultivator

and the anxiety to centralise all judicial and exceutive powers in their own hands. These village communities deprived of their functions disintegrated.

Sir Thomas Munro's name is associated with the establishment of the ryotwari system in Madras. This was a settlement made by the government directly with the ryots in the form of a money assessment realised from the cultivators. The assessment varied according to the extent of produce each year. Over-assessment vitiated this early land revenue settlement. It remained a persistent evil for many years to come. Most of the ryots were, if not annual bankrupts, at least annual applicants for remission. One of the important consequences of a prolonged period of a deteriorating level of living is that it lowers the horizon of expectations. The ryotwari settlement in Madras acquired its modern form from 1855 after a full survey and settlement of the province.

In Bombay also the ryotwari system was followed but with necessary local variations. According to Elphinstone village communities provided excellent remedy for the imperfections of a bad system and also some remedy against tyranny and rapacity. But village communities under the new system of administration disappeared in Bombay as they disappeared in Madras. Elphinstone had hoped in vain to combine the principle of the ryotwari system with the principle of the village community system. From 1816 the ryotwari system was gradually introduced. The demand was fixed districtwise with a very complicated table of rates and crops. Goldsmid, Wingate and Davidson propounded some principles. Every variety of soil was referred to one of nine classes. It recognised the transferable right of the cultivator to his field, swept away the ancient right which the *Mirasi* (hereditary) cultivator had enjoyed under the Marathas. It substituted for the equitable basis of the field produce an impracticable geological basis for the purpose of assessment. In Bombay, more perhaps than in any other part of India, the cultivator fell into the clutches of the money-lender. The Deccan riots in Poona and Ahmadnagar and the Madras famine of 1877 exposed the glaring defects of this new system.

Banaras was permanently settled by John Shore. In the ceded districts of Oudh, in the Ganges-Jumna Doab and in the Delhi region there were estates of *talukdars* who were very much like Bengal zamindars. But no permanent settlement was made in these regions. Under William Bentinck the State demand was settled at 66 per cent

of the rental and settlements were made for thirty years. The greatest defect of the settlement was that it left so much latitude to the settlement officer. The data being vague, the tax on agriculture was too variable. The principle was that the injured will fly to the courts of justice. This undermined village institutions everywhere and led to the ascendancy of the money-lender.

One half of the net produce of the soil became the British standard of assessment in the North-Western Province, the Punjab and the Central Province. In Madras the standard was one half of the net produce. In Bombay there was no theoretical standard at all. But after fifty years of blunders and over-assessment one half of the net produce of the soil was extended to all parts of India where the land revenue was not permanently fixed. The official faith was individualism—free trade in land.

It would not be inappropriate if we anticipate some of the consequences of this free trade in land. With all important industries destroyed the people were thrown on the precarious resource of agriculture. There was expansion of rural credit and there was increase of population. The classic case of the effects of usurious money-lending is to be noticed in Bombay riots. In the Bombay districts the money-lenders were outsiders. In many other parts of India they were local people. The local money-lender could not always carry things too far. Almost everywhere the interests of the lower agricultural classes were very much at the mercy of those above them but in India agricultural indebtedness reached unbelievable proportions and further complicated the situation. The usurer, who was quick-witted in all matters of business, would advance money upon pledge, mortgage or security. Rates of interest were very high and there was naturally accumulation of interest. The burden of debt steadily increased. Money was sometimes borrowed on personal security at 35 to 50 per cent. Measures which the government adopted from time to time for the relief of agricultural ryots only made the money-lenders more rapacious and fraudulent. Improvidence, by itself, was not always the nucleus of this indebtedness—small loans for food, for seed, for the purchase of bullocks and government assessment swelled this indebtedness. Ancestral debt was the burden which the cultivator carried. There was an inferior class of money-lenders who dealt at exorbitant rates of interest or with the lowest strata of the agricultural population. They were at times even worse than non-indigenous money-lenders. In some cases the cultivator became the

bondsman of the creditor. The connection of these abuses with the British judicial system cannot be disputed. It is no wonder that all this erupted into what is generally known as the Deccan riots. What happened at Poona and Ahmadnagar was only typical. There was not an epidemic of riots but conditions elsewhere were only slightly different from Poona and Ahmadnagar. A poor society became poorer. Macaulay's India of 'usurers, money-lenders and sharp legal practitioners' was the creation of the new system of administration. The evils that prevailed in the days of the Mughals were very different from the new oppressions now brought into existence.

Indian Finance (1858-1905): The East India Company's finance was for long too much dependent on land revenue. Bengal alone produced a surplus, not Madras or Bombay; but new land revenue settlement ensured surplus in Madras, Bombay and North-Western Province (U.P.), C.P. and the Punjab. Opium monopoly was another important source of income and with the spread of the habit of litigation, revenue from judicial stamps. The public debt, rise in military expenditure and home charges added to deficits. Land revenue and opium together amounted to 4/5th of the public revenue. Inland duties had been abolished in 1835. On 30 April 1858 the total debt stood at 69½ million sterling.

After 1858 the state of things showed a remarkable change. De-industrialisation of India had been completed by the end of the third decade of East India Company's rule and Manchester cotton cloth flooded the Indian market. A new economy was taking shape. European banks in India in the first half of the nineteenth century suffered from repeated bankruptcies and Indian businessmen associated with the British in mercantile business were involved in these successive insolvencies. Indigenous banking capital, not connected with British business, was passive rather than active. There was excessive caution and very short horizons. From predatory European commercial ventures in India, a period of blind eagerness of individuals, we pass to a settled, well-regulated phase of British commercial capitalism after the practical errors of trade had gradually discovered themselves.

In India British merchants found the largest coherent market. In this open market British commercial capitalism could easily dominate and industrial capitalism followed. England's predominant role in an undeveloped economy became well-established in the second half of the nineteenth century. British Chambers of Commerce

were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and the managing agency system helped to organise British business in India on sound and safe lines. They were in a position to put pressure on the government in their own interest and the government was more than eager to listen to them. Lancashire cotton interest, Cheshire salt interest could now operate with greater authority. The flow of British capital to India began—capital for railways—on unusually profitable terms. Until 1869 private companies under a government guarantee gave a return of 5 per cent. Government could not control their expenditure or appointments. Government began to start the construction of railways in 1869. After 1880 there was again a return to the guarantee system for some years. The layout of the railway lines and railway freights favoured exports from India and imports into India in the interest of British trade. Railways and telegraphs gave the greatest impetus to this economic change. Every obstruction to freedom of trade was removed for the benefit of British manufacturers and shippers. There was development of jute, cotton and tea industries.

British policy was clearly evident in fiscal legislation. In 1879 import duties on cotton goods were surrendered. In 1882 all import duties except on salt and liquor were repealed. In 1894 import duties on cotton were reimposed. At the same time an excise duty was imposed on such Indian goods as competed with Lancashire. But in 1896 Cotton Duties Act provided: 'There shall be levied and collected at every mill in British India on all cotton goods produced in such mill a duty at the rate 3½ per cent.' It thus threw a burden on Indian mills which competed with no mills in Europe. This was colonial economy at its worst. It raised the price of the poor man's coarse cloth produced in India. 'As an example of fiscal injustice this Act of 1896 is unexampled in any civilised country.'

Land revenue, salt tax, excise duties and stamps were the principal sources of revenue and they affected the poorer section of the people. The income tax was withdrawn after a very brief period and not reintroduced until 1888. There was no attempt on the part of government for economy in expenditure.

Economic nationalism was bound to develop in this context. Ranade commented at the Industrial Conference of 1890: 'The industry and commerce of the country, such as it was, is passing out of our hands and the country is fed, clothed, warmed, washed, lighted, helped, comforted by a thousand arts and industries in the manufacture of which its sons have a decreasing share.... It is

transferring the monopoly not only of wealth but what is more important, of skill, talent and activity to others.' At the opening of the century British capital invested in commerce and industry amounted to £350 millions in indigo, tea and coffee plantations, in coal, gold and manganese mining and in jute manufacture. Indian capital investment in factory and mining was only £14.7 millions. The Queen's Proclamation deserves to be quoted in this context: 'It is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India.' Dadabhai Naoroji in his celebrated book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* emphasised the exploitative character of British rule in India. Gokhale pointed out: 'We have no constitutional sefeguards against the misapplication of our revenues for extra-Indian requirements ... the government of India cannot be much interested in economy, almost all internal administration having been made over to local governments under the decentralisation scheme.' He emphasised, 'I condemn the manner in which the government are going in for more and more railways starving out more useful things. This has resulted in the exploitation of our resources by the indigo, tea, coffee and other planters.' 'There are so many idlers connected with land. I believe half the number would do the agricultural work and the other half are kept in land because they have nothing else to do.' He added in reply to a query that the opening of fresh trades meant only that we got only the wages and everything else went out. In his view the transformation of India into a country preponderatingly agricultural and dependent upon imported manufacture was a long process and was accelerated by the extension of railways. Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade as also Gokhale emphasised that the key to industrialisation was in the hands of foreigners. R. C. Dutt's two books —*Economic History of India Under British Rule* and *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*—produced, in the words of Aurobindo Ghose, 'the most politically effective contribution to Indian literature'. Aurobindo wrote: 'Without the economic history and its damning story of England's commercial and fiscal dealings we doubt whether the public mind would have been ready for the boycott (*Swadeshi* movement). In this one instance it may be said of him that he not only wrote history but created it.' In one of his Supreme Legislative Civil Budget speeches Gokhale called for three-way tax reduction—reduction of salt duty, the income tax to be made more progressive and abolition of cotton goods excise, and to balance the reduction, he suggested retrenchment in military expenditure. He also wanted a

diversion of a portion of the funds to help undernourished education.

Famines: There were frequent and sometimes very severe famines in the second half of the nineteenth century—in Orissa in 1866, N.W.F.P. (U.P.) and Rajputana in 1868-69, Bombay, Mysore and Madras in 1876-77, U.P. and Punjab in 1878, C.P., Bihar and some parts of the Punjab in 1896-97, Bombay, Berar, Punjab, Ajmir in 1899-1900. In 1900 Gujarat also suffered from a famine. In Orissa famine 1.3 million lives were lost. The famine of 1876-77 in Madras was responsible for the loss of 3.5 million lives, the famine of 1896-97 for nearly 4.5 millions.

Natural causes like failure of rains do not explain this endemic famine. Growing poverty and rising prices partly explain this recurrence. Even in normal years over 30 per cent of people suffered from insufficiency of food. Rural indebtedness and rack-renting might explain destitution to a considerable extent. There was a state of semi-starvation among large classes of population in many parts of the country. The position of the cultivators had deteriorated definitely. Isolated instances of opposition like indigo disturbances in Bengal in 1860, riots in Poona and Ahmadnagar in 1878-79 were only indications of the deep malaise. Palliatives could not solve such a problem. Basic measures to check famines were not attempted.

British Relations with Princely States (1858-1947): The general principles which guided British relations with 'native' states can be thus summarised. Their foreign relations were in British hands and in any treaty which the British Government might conclude with others which affected India they were automatically included. The British Government could not avoid taking some interest in the affairs of the states, exercised some control over administration, took special interest in matters dealing with minorities and deposed a prince whose administration led to violent agitation or revolt. Each state had to grant facilities for British military needs, construction of military roads, etc. They were all expected to aid in British economic schemes. Even if there was no treaty, persuasion was applied. But the British Government made no effort to alter the constitution of states or their organisation. The most important events of the period in connection with British relations with native states were the deposition of Malhar Rao, Gaikwad of Baroda, for 'notorious misconduct', proclamation of the Queen as the Empress of India and Lord Ripon's restoration of the Maharaja of Mysore to power. Lansdowne had to suppress the revolt of Tikendrajit in Manipur and Curzon persuaded

the Nizam to let the British Government incorporate Berar with British India. Under the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme a Chamber of Princes was inaugurated by royal proclamation. But after the introduction of political reforms in British India the anachronistic character of the government of these states became more than ever apparent and political reforms were very naturally demanded by these people. Jawaharlal Nehru played a very important part in the states' people movement for self-government. The British Government's policy was to regard the states as breakwaters against rebellion. When the British Government's decision to quit India was announced and British paramountcy lapsed, the Government of India succeeded in absorbing these states. The princely states problem was solved with unexpected smoothness. Troubles in Junagarh, Hyderabad and Kashmir created some difficulty for some time.

Indian Entrepreneurship (1905-1947): Indigenous banking did not encourage the growth of industry. Conditions were not favourable to the emergence of entrepreneurs. In England and, generally speaking, in the West two principal groups were responsible for the growth of factories—merchants and master craftsmen. Merchants had capital and marketing ability and master craftsmen knew how to handle smaller groups of workers. In India taboos of the Hindu world disappeared very fast in the early years of the twentieth century. It is not surprising that the earliest entrepreneurs among Indians were the Parsees. They had no caste system which restricted their occupations, they had no difficulty in visiting foreign countries and adopting foreign practices. They began as brokers for early British exports and imports. They themselves went to Africa, to Arab States and even to China. They had a natural aptitude for business and began to manufacture yarn and cloth in Bombay. The slow working of internal and external forces gradually led to the growth of Indian capitalist enterprise in India. Much of British entrepreneural enterprise related either to government or to the interests in some way connected with Britain. The putting out merchants, the *banya* class, were familiar with trade, they possessed capital and they were eager for profits. They did not know much about the administration of labour. They took finished goods brought by the British merchants. But the prospect of greater profits made them abandon their former policy.

Indian capitalism did not emerge as an independent element until after the First World War. The basic policy of the Government of India up to about 1930 was free trade—export of raw materials and

food grains and import of manufactured products and it was not necessary to enunciate any policy of helping industry. Whatever patronage was given to industry was reserved for Europeans. R. N. Mukherjee found that as T. C. Mukherjee & Co. the firm would not receive contracts from government or semi-government sources but when he joined with Acquin Martin and adopted the name of Martin & Co. contracts were very easy to obtain. There was clear discrimination. Technical education was not encouraged. European business was thoroughly organised and there was practically a collective monopoly in industrial fields. The organised money market was European. But it would be a mistake to think that foreign capital flowed into India. Most of the capital of European enterprises in India came from their profits in trade, industry, banking in India and from the surpluses of their high salaries in government employ. 'Foreign capital' was not always actual transfer of resources from Europe to India.

Outside the field of cotton industry, Indians first entered jute manufacture and trade. They took advantage of British preoccupation in the First World War. The great world-wide depression in 1930 also provided Indian capital with its opportunity. There was also some repatriation of British capital during this period. Thus Indian capital found new opportunity for opening new industries. Indian marketing technique began to develop. The huge internal market helped Indian cotton mill industry. The Far Eastern market, though unsettled, was at this stage more profitable to the Western investor. The Parsees controlled the largest sector of the cotton mill industry concentrated in Bombay. From the very beginning Parsee co-operation with the British was a feature of Bombay's commercial life. With their accumulated experience in commerce they now ventured very successfully in the field of industry. Indigenous banking became also active. The cotton mill industry in Gujarat perhaps grew faster than in Bombay. The most extraordinary feat of entrepreneurship was displayed by the Tatas in the development of iron and steel industry. Indigenous bankers had their accumulated hoards. The Goenkas, the Jatias, the Bangurs and the Birlas with their finances established financial control over managing agencies and started new industrial enterprises. There was now an Indian capitalist group side by side with the British.

As Indian capitalism emerged as an independent force there was a very considerable increase of the number of industrial labourers

leading to the organisation of trade unions and factory legislation. Peasant movements in villages and trade unions of industrial workers led to the growth of an economic concept of society. New India knows that the output of technological progress needs scientifically qualified men, power, equipment, planning and proper organisation. 'The basic problem in India is in the factors in the structure of society which inhibit the productive use of savings.'

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

NEW AWAKENING IN INDIA

The first embodiment of a new awakening was Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833). He began a movement for the rejection of religious and social impurities from Hinduism. He was anxious for the regeneration of social and national life and for the acceptance of what was beneficial in western civilisation. He started the *Brahmo Samaj* movement in 1828. It was continued by Debendra Nath Tagore, father of Rabindranath. After him came Keshab Chandra Sen. They were the three leaders in succession, one after another. But the *Brahmo Samaj* was split up after Keshab Chandra. There were three branches. But all of them took their stand on the Vedanta philosophy, condemned the worship of images and wanted the abolition of the caste system. The movement spread throughout India. In Bombay it was known as the *Prarthana Samaj*. The spirit of reform and progress thus began to spread.

But two other religious personalities with a very different public appeal helped this new awakening. They were Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836-86), the saint, and Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), his disciple. Ramakrishna preached the gospel of the unity of all religions. He discouraged some imitative tendencies of the *Brahmo Samaj* and preached the necessity of symbolism in religious worship. He filled an emotional void in the soul of modern India. His disciple Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission, an order of monks, to spread his master's religious teachings in India and abroad. He also inspired a spirit of patriotism. 'So far as Bengal is concerned Swami Vivekananda may be regarded as the spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement.' Even after his early death his influence continued to spread. Ramakrishna Mission is a very effective organisation in and outside India. There was another important new religious personality in North-Western India. He was Swami Dayananda. He founded his organisation in 1875, which is known as the Arya Samaj. He advocated a return to the pristine purity of Hinduism. The movement spread in the Punjab and the United Provinces. None of these three organisations had a political mission. But they helped to develop a spirit of patriotism.

In Western India the new spirit appeared as a movement for educational and social reform. M. G. Ranade awakened this new

spirit and his disciple was M. G. Gokhale. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, G. G. Agarkar and V. S. Apte founded the Deccan Education Society. In 1905 Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society to 'train national missionaries for the service of India'. Tilak revived the *Ganapati* festival and introduced the Sivaji festival to give a national turn to popular ideas. In South India the Theosophical Society was founded at Adyar near Madras by Madame Blavatsky. When Mrs. Annie Besant joined it in 1893, this society helped to give the people a faith in their own culture. She later took an active part in politics and advocated Indian Home Rule.

History of Western Education: Universities were established at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. The Governor-General was the Chancellor of the Calcutta University and the Governors of Bombay and Madras were Chancellors of the other two. There were various examinations for diplomas and degrees in Arts, Law, Medicine and Engineering. The Calcutta University Senate had 38 members of whom 6 were Indian, Bombay had 29 members of whom 5 were Indian and Madras had three Indian senators out of a total of 40. To the four faculties a science faculty was added later. There was a steady growth in the number of colleges and students. At the first entrance examination of the three universities 219 candidates were successful, in 1882 this number increased to 2,778. So great was the rush for education that it was found that schools could be self-supporting without Government aid and there was one single goal—success in examinations. The universities were purely affiliating bodies. Such affiliating universities were gradually established in other provinces also. Universities conducted examinations, regulated admission and did some supervision of instruction. Though some Government colleges were established and some private colleges also came into existence, no funds were provided by the Government for university professorships. University degrees were the main passport to Government jobs and some professions and there was very little of other openings for educated young men. The total number of affiliated colleges was 207 in British India in 1922 and the number of students in colleges was 50,000. The Universities' Act of 1904 laid down certain rigorous rules for the affiliation of colleges and schools but the great hunger for higher education in the Arts colleges continued in the absence of vocational courses. There was little or no emphasis on science and technology. Residential universities were afterwards established in Aligarh, Banaras and Dacca.

But it was left to the Calcutta University to break fresh ground through the creation of centralised post-graduate departments in 1916 under the leadership of Ashutosh Mookherjee. Professors and lecturers specialised in post-graduate teaching and research. A commission of enquiry under the chairmanship of Michael Sadler recomended in 1919 that the teaching resources of the city of Calcutta were to be organised to create a real teaching university and a new residential university was to be established in Dacca. Vocational and professional training was to be seriously taken in hand. But the Government's policy was not to provide funds for higher science teaching. But it was private munificence that ultimately enabled the university to open its college of science and technology and endow chairs on science subjects. In the meantime new universities were coming into existence in other provinces and states—Allahabad, Mysore, Hyderabad, Nagpur, Delhi, Agra, Utkal, Rajputana, Saugar, Gauhati, Poona (in 1949), etc. Some of these were teaching universities like Allahabad, some affiliating like Agra. Secondary education was handed over to boards of secondary education. To give an idea of the expansion of education some figures of the number of students may be quoted from the Radhakrishnan Commission Report. It gives an idea of the state of things in 1946-47: Affiliating-teaching—Calcutta 45,008; Bombay 43,090; Madras 28,888; Patna 15,471; Saugar 1,828.

There were nineteen universities in 1947.

But university education was very much in strait-jackets. The average standard of our degrees was low and there was too much wastage. Humanistic and scientific research had made very little progress. Similarly, agriculture, engineering, teaching, medicine, with other new branches of knowledge, stood in urgent need of development.

Sri Aurobindo had pointed out at the beginning of the nineteenth century that our university education suffered from its calculated poverty and insufficiency, its subordination to Government's needs. But European humanism's richest quality influenced us in a different way. The conception of research and more research gradually permeated university life. The pattern in which higher education was crystallised was broken. Nationalism was a by-product of university education.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

INDIA'S FREEDOM MOVEMENT—END OF THE BRITISH INDIAN EMPIRE

THE EARLY INDICATIONS of nationalism in India were literary and intellectual rather than political and organisational. An image of India had begun to form among the more imaginative and intellectual people, belonging, in general, to the English-educated middle class. Ideas of nationalism were inspired by the Western liberal notions that had begun to filter into the minds of educated Indians. The model of Britain as the world's most successful nation aroused their admiration and also a desire for emulation. Studies on India's past by orientalists such as William Jones (1746–94) down to the famous Indologist Max Müller (1823–1900) encouraged a feeling of pride in India's heritage. The transition from consciousness to organisation occurred slowly, through the formation of public associations —a novelty in the Indian context and providing a training ground for leadership, however limited the aims of these organisations might have been. The programmes of the earliest associations had no particular nationalist content. The Landholders' Society, founded in 1837 in Calcutta, was an association of the landlords of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. The Bengal British India Society, founded in 1843, had a broader programme—the promotion of the general public interest. The two associations combined in 1851 to form the British Indian Association. Similar organisational ideas were at work in Bombay and Madras. The Madras Native Association and the Bombay Association were founded in 1852. These and similar associations in other parts of the country were mainly petitioning bodies which acted as a buffer between the British Government in India and the relatively affluent and educated groups of Indians.

From the 1870s the influence of the educated middle class and the emerging professional groups began to be felt increasingly in public life. The associations of these people tended to be more broad-based than the earlier associations dominated by wealthy and aristocratic groups. Justice Ranade (1852–1904) and his associates founded the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha in 1867. This, too, had a substantial aristocratic element. But Ranade and his disciple Gokhale (1866–1915) represented a different outlook. Ranade has been described as 'a giant among the moderates' and a 'thoroughly representative man,

speaking with authority on all legal, political and social questions'. In official circles Ranade was considered to be in the Deccan what Parnell was in Ireland. The Madras Mahajan Sabha was established in 1884. This and similar associations were concerned mainly with administrative and legislative questions. The *Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha*, however, focused attention on economic questions relating to India—indicating a new direction in nationalist thinking and an outlook broader than that of the older associations.

The Indian Association

The search for an associational outlet for a broader outlook on national questions led to the foundation of the Indian Association in Calcutta in 1876. The new pattern of leadership was represented by professional people like Surendranath Banerjee (1848–1925) and Anandamohan Bose (1847–1906). The table of occupations of the committee members of the Indian Association, as computed by Anil Seal in *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, shows that out of a total of fifty-two members twenty-six belonged to the legal professions and eleven were journalists, doctors and teachers.

It was an association of the educated middle class in the true sense of the term. From the beginning it sought an all-India platform on national issues and introduced techniques of extensive agitation. In conformity to its basic character the first major issue on which the Indian Association started agitations was the reform of the civil service regulations, specifically the raising of the age limit of candidates so as to accommodate more Indians in the Indian Civil Service. Surendranath Banerjee went on a lecture tour to different parts of India to drive home the importance of the issue to English-educated Indians. The Indian Association also organised agitations against the Arms Act and the Vernacular Press Act, and pro-tenant demonstrations in connection with proposed tenancy legislations. It sought to draw public attention to the conditions of virtual slavery that existed in British plantations. Significant links developed between the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, the most effective political association in Western India, and the Indian Association, its counterpart in Eastern India, both seeking a broader political, economic and social framework within which to function.

While moderation was the keynote of contemporary politics, feelings of bitterness and hostility between the rulers and the ruled were not far below the surface. Such feelings were stronger in Bengal than

in the more sober and calm Bombay Presidency. Lord Lytton, Governor-General and Viceroy from 1876 to 1880, missed no opportunity to attack the 'semi-educated natives', by which he meant particularly the English-educated Bengalis, the 'seditious baboos' of the English official imagination. Even when Gladstone's government recalled Lord Lytton and replaced him by Lord Ripon, a representative figure of Victorian liberalism, the conservative and 'racist' elements continued to rule the Indian scene. The hard core of this group believed in the power of conquest and not in the consent of the governed. Ideologically, the Victorian liberal maintained that greater freedom should be allowed to the people of the colonies. But he was not sure how his principle could work in India, the non-white colony where British interests were too entrenched for the relatively fragile liberal principles to gain ascendancy. Ripon, however, observed among Indians a growing community who resented racial inequality and wanted a share in the governing of their own country. The Ilbert Bill controversy in 1883 and Ripon's failure to get the Bill passed (which would have enabled Indian judges to sit in judgment on Europeans) showed the weakness of liberalism at the level of actual operation. Ripon's government remained basically the same as Lytton's government, in spite of Ripon's best intentions.

The Birth of the Congress

Liberalism on the side of the ruling class could, however, be genuine as far as an individual's own convictions were concerned. But the most such feelings resulted in were scattered groups of Europeans growing like delicate saplings around the hard rock of the ruling power in India. Educated Indians, for their part, were prepared to accept liberalism as a basic principle of operation. It suited their mild nationalism. Allan Octavian Hume (1829–1912), a retired English civil servant and a liberal with an understanding of the educated Indian mind, took the initiative in convening the first session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay in December 1885. It was attended by seventy-two delegates and presided over by W. C. Bonnerjee, a barrister from Calcutta. Hume and a number of European liberals, such as W. Wedderburn, David Yule, and in later years Sir Henry Cotton, were concerned about the new forces they could see gradually building up in India. A link between the liberal elements in the British Government in India and their counterparts in Indian society, they felt, would temper a harsh situation which

might develop through a confrontation of the contemptuous and arrogant British ruling class, on the one hand, and an increasingly articulate and expanding community of educated Indians, on the other. In Hume's own words, the Congress was to be 'a safety-valve'—a liberal device for a controlled outlet of new forces. It was a sensible move and characteristically British. Hume was one of those Englishmen who loved India and her people. He was the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress for the first twenty-two years (1885–1908). On his death in 1912 the Congress adopted a resolution calling him 'the father and founder of the Indian National Congress'.

The second session of the Congress was attended by 450 members chosen at public meetings and by public bodies. The president was Dadabhai Naoroji. The Congress now became an assembly of delegates with a network of local bodies. It has been said that the Indian National Congress was a product of Indian university life. The idea of a university cries out against a ruling caste bias. It might be that there were perhaps not more than 50,000 Indians acquainted with Western culture and civilisation. But there was undoubtedly an educated public opinion conscious of the exclusiveness and expensiveness of British rule. A Congress resolution of 1892 is significant in this context: 'We may hereafter have the same facilities of national life that exist in Great Britain itself.'

At first the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin (1884–88), and the Government took a favourable view of the new organisation. The Viceroy even met at a garden party the delegates to the Calcutta session of the Congress. In 1887, however, Lord Dufferin changed his attitude and openly criticised the Congress at a public meeting, describing it as the organisation of 'a microscopic minority'. Apparently, the Congress was developing its own line of activity and was becoming more complex than an English club. The number of delegates rose from 71 at the first session to 1889 at the fifth session. New elements of national life began to be increasingly represented in the Congress and though the basic character of the organisation as a petitioning body dominated by a Westernised elite did not change, new pressures began building up within it. Year after year resolutions were passed calling for, among other things, the abolition of the Arms Act, the extension of trial by jury, the holding of the Indian Civil Service examination simultaneously in England and India, the expansion of the Supreme and Local Legislative Councils, tariff regulations to strengthen the Indian economy and larger Indian representation in the administra-

tion. Few of the demands were conceded by the Government. As a result, the foundation on which the National Congress was initially built—faith in the British principles of justice and fair play—was subjected to a slow process of erosion.

Moderates and Extremists

The early Congress was a weak organisation which came to life usually at the annual sessions. Its policy of moderation was practically forced upon it by its weakness. However, by the late nineteenth century nationalism in India was reaching another and a more vigorous stage of development which the Congress organisation did not yet reflect. Bengal and Maharashtra were showing signs of a new restive spirit. In Bengal, Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) brought in a sense of spiritual vigour while patriotic fervour was encouraged by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's *Anandamath*. Aurobindo Ghose wrote a series of articles in the Bombay weekly *Indu Prakash* in 1893–94 under the title 'New Lamps for Old'. An unusual nationalist leader, Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920), appeared on the political scene of Maharashtra; he represented a sharp reaction against the moderate line of the Congress.

Tilak was a very capable scholar, born in a Maratha Brahman family. Educated in the Deccan College, he took a degree in law and started two important journals—*Maharatta* in English and *Kesari* in Marathi. He inaugurated the Sivaji festival to inspire a strong sense of patriotic feelings and gave a new shape to the traditional worship of Ganapati in Maharashtra. A militant spirit and a new political idiom based on Indian images and symbols were in evidence. Sir Valentine Chirol of the London *Times* called Tilak the 'Father of Indian Unrest'. In 1897 Tilak was arrested on a charge of inciting violence against the government through his journal *Kesari* and was sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment. This was an unusual event in the generally moderate politics of the era. There was a strong reaction to the event in Calcutta and elsewhere in the country. 'A nation in tears' was how Surendranath Banerjee described it at the Congress session of 1897. Students wore black badges and workers protested. Obviously, there was a change in the scale of operation of political forces in the country. Nationalist politics had crossed the lines demarcated by India's liberal mentors. Tilak's example was followed up by Bepin Chandra Pal (1858–1932) and Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950) in Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928) in the Punjab.

Tilak brought to the surface the conflict between the two groups in the Congress that later came to be called the Moderates and the Extremists. While the early Congress never challenged the power of the British over India Tilak declared that '*Swaraj* [Home Rule] is my birthright and I will have it'.

Partition of Bengal and Swadeshi

Then, in 1905, the Partition of Bengal took place. It served, more than any other event, to sharpen the differences between the rulers and the ruled and also between the Moderates and the Extremists within the Congress. By Lord Curzon's order the Bengal Presidency was divided into two parts—one, Eastern Bengal and Assam with a population of 31 million, and two, the rest of Bengal with a population of 54 million, including 18 million Bengalis and 36 million Biharis and Oriyas. The Partition was defended for administrative reasons; the Bengal Presidency, it was claimed, was too big for efficient administration. However, the political motive behind it was clear. 'Bengal united is a power,' wrote Risley, Home Secretary to the Government of India. 'Bengal divided will pull in different ways . . . One of our main objects is to split up and thereby to weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule.'

The proposal to partition Bengal and the indifference of the Government to the constitutional agitation against it caused a further disillusionment among the nationalists about the effectiveness of the moderate line. Bepin Chandra Pal wrote in 1905: 'If anything could prove the utter futility of our so-called methods of constitutional political agitation . . . , the history of the agitation against the proposal to partition Bengal has done it.'

The *Swadeshi* movement, as the anti-Partition upsurge came to be called, threw up two new techniques of political confrontation—boycott and passive resistance. The boycott of British goods and the substitution of *swadeshi* or Indian for foreign goods gave the movement an all-India character. Moderates in the Congress were hesitant about the idea of boycott, though they accepted *Swadeshi*. Extremists argued that the ideas of *Swadeshi* and boycott were complementary. Differences such as these led to conflicts between the Moderates and the Extremists. The 'Boycott Resolution' passed by the Congress at Benaras under pressure from the Extremists was a compromise. Its confirmation in Calcutta roused resentments among the Moderates who decided to come to grips with the situation at the

next conference in Surat in December 1907. There the Extremists became apprehensive that the resolution on *Swaraj* and boycott would be whittled down by the Moderates. Tilak wanted to be assured that there would be no change in the resolutions taken at the Calcutta conference. A violent disgreement occurred, culminating in the famous Surat split. The Moderates, meeting later in Allahabad in April 1908 under the leadership of Feroz Shah Mehta and G. K. Gokhale, drafted a new constitution for the Congress and resolved to follow the constitutional means of steady reform within the existing system of administration. The Extremists were excluded because they would not accept the new constitution.

Thus, the *Swadeshi* movement in Bengal brought some national issues into the open and precipitated a crisis in the Congress organisation that had been simmering within it for over a decade. The new movement definitely encouraged mass participation in politics. The theme of passive resistance implied an organised boycott of British goods, the official education system and the judicial and executive authorities, supported by constructive activities such as the promotion of national industries and national education. The theme also outlined a programme of civil disobedience which did not exclude violence. The movement in Bengal thus generated new ideas at the national level of action.

The Challenge of Extremism

At the same time, the inability of the Congress to get satisfactory concessions from the Government led one section of the educated middle class to resort to terrorism as the means to achieve their growing political and nationalist aspirations. One of the earliest indications of extremist violence against British rule is to be found in the activities of the Chapekar brothers in Maharashtra. They were accused of founding a secret society and assassinating two unpopular British officials in 1897.

The extremist movement gathered momentum from the *Swadeshi* upsurge in Bengal. A network of secret societies spread over large parts of Bengal. The most prominent was the Anusilan Samiti, the parent organisation of the extremists. It originally started as a society for the promotion of patriotic culture and education but soon became associated with ideas of violence and the cult of the bomb. Barindra Kumar Ghose, brother of Aurobindo Ghose, took a leading part in organising the extremist movement between 1906 and 1908. The

ascetic ideal that inspired groups of patriotic young men at this stage was derived to a considerable extent from Bankimchandra's *Ananda-math*. In the secret reports of the Government they were sometimes described as political monks. An audacious venture of a group of extremists in this period was the publication of a periodical called *Yugantar* (The New Era) which openly preached sedition, though service to the country was its guiding ideal.

On 6 December 1907 an attempt was made near Midnapur to blow up the train carrying the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. In the same month a former District Magistrate of Dacca was shot and wounded. In April 1908 a bomb intended for Kingsford, a Judge, killed two ladies, Mrs. and Miss Kennedy. As a sequel to this incident Kshudiram Bose was executed and Prafulla Chaki committed suicide on being arrested. A secret factory of bombs and explosives was discovered near Calcutta in 1908. This led to the arrest of thirty-four people—Aurobindo Ghose, Barindra Kumar Ghose and their close followers—and culminated in the famous Alipur Conspiracy Case (1908) in the Calcutta High Court. Barindra and some of his associates were sentenced to transportation for life. Aurobindo Ghose was, however, acquitted. The extremist movement in Bengal gained a new momentum from this sensational trial. A spectacular action took place in 1912 when a bomb was thrown at the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, who was leading a state procession in Delhi. Three people were sentenced to death. But Rash Behari Bose, who is said to have master-minded the plan, escaped arrest.

Outside Bengal riots occurred in the major towns of the Punjab in 1907 over the unpopular Punjab Colonisation Bill and led to the arrest and deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. In 1911 a District Magistrate was shot dead in Madras. In Maharashtra V. D. Savarkar and his associates kept up the militant spirit. In his book, *My Indian Years*, Lord Hardinge (1910–16) spoke of an average of one political murder every two weeks.

The Government followed a policy of 'blended repression and concessions'. Attempts were made to isolate the extremists. The Partition of Bengal was revoked in 1911; the Congress was sought to be further placated by constitutional reforms, while Hindu–Muslim differences were fomented.

Constitutional Reforms

In 1892, under the Indian Councils Act, the Government had

granted elected members only the right to put questions and discuss the budget, though voting on the budget was not allowed. Nor was the Government prepared to adopt the principle of election in the constitution of the legislatures. But with growing popular participation in Congress-led and other anti-Government agitations the Government decided to grant some electoral concessions. At the same time, the Government did not lose this opportunity of pursuing its traditional policy of divide and rule. The All-India Muslim League was founded in 1906, and before the next instalment of reforms was announced, a deputation was led (under official inspiration) by the Aga Khan, who requested the Viceory to provide separate electorates for the Muslims under the proposed electoral scheme. The demand, a command performance, was conceded in the new Act, the Morley–Minto Reforms of 1909 as it came to be known popularly. The size of the legislatures, central and provincial, was increased at the Centre to 60, in some of the provinces to 50. The principle of election was conceded, but it was indirect. The biggest electorate had only 660 voters. In the Imperial Legislative Council there was a standing official majority. Putting of supplementary questions, moving of resolutions and discussions of the budget were, however, no longer enough. They could not compensate for what was now the Congress demand—self-government. Though Mr. (later Lord) S. P. Sinha became a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, India could not be placated by such paltry concessions. In 1911 the Partition of Bengal was annulled; the capital was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi, which seemed to be politically a much quieter place. Lord Curzon, with his historic sense, had had a correct premonition. Delhi was the grave of many empires.

The Congress continued to be the focus of Indian nationalist activities. After the Surat split (1907) the Moderates ruled the Congress organisation for nine years but the mainstream of the national movement followed a course over which they had little control. In 1916 a compromise was effected between the Extremists and the Moderates at the Lucknow session. In 1915 Gokhale, the ablest of the Moderates, died at the age of forty-nine. Tilak, who had been sentenced to six years' imprisonment for sedition, had been released in 1914. His political skill was very effective at Lucknow. He joined hands with Mrs. Besant, a spirited Irish lady with a keen interest in India's freedom struggle, and came to an understanding with the All-India Muslim League. Together, the Congress and the Muslim League put

forward a demand for Indian self-government. Mrs. Besant became the next President of the Congress. The Moderates fell into the background.

Meanwhile, the world was going through the upheaval of the First World War. Britain was fully utilising her Indian resources in this Great War. She proclaimed that she was fighting for the freedom of suppressed nationalities. Public opinion in India now demanded an announcement regarding the policy of British rule in India. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, announced that the policy of the British Government was that of 'increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'. The reforms proposed in the Montagu–Chelmsford report were embodied in the Government of India Act 1919. It set up what is known as a dyarchy. In the provinces the government was to be composed of two sections: 'transferred' and 'reserved' departments. The transferred departments—education, agriculture, excise and local self-government—were to be under ministers from the elected members of the Council and removable by a vote of that Council. The reserved departments—police, justice, finance—were placed under Executive Councillors, who would be independent of the vote of the Legislative Council. The Governor's Council was to be composed of these two sets. But in the central government all the departments were to be administered by the members of the Governor-General's Executive Council. They were independent of the vote of the central legislature in its two branches—the lower house, called the Indian Legislative Council, and the upper house, called the Council of States. The central legislature represented only British India, not the Indian States, ruled by Indian Princes. Separate electorates were retained. Indian national opinion regarded this constitution as very inadequate and unsatisfactory. The idea of gaining power in stages with the cooperation of the British by constitutional and legal means looked like 'skinning a live tiger paw by paw'. As a distinguished British historian said on one occasion: 'Only onions can be eaten leaf by leaf.' The Rowlatt Act appeared shortly after the Montagu–Chelmsford report. It completed the apparatus of a police state.

In March and April 1919 disbanded Indian soldiers who had fought in the war returned to the Punjab, to the insecurity of unemployment. There were higher prices, the forcible method of recruitment was still

remembered with great bitterness as also the fierce suppression of the *Kamgata Maru* people. The arrogance of British officials was also another cause of popular indignation. Mobs attacked isolated Europeans, there was some rioting and some expression of racial indignation. Two nationalist leaders were arrested. Two banks were attacked. Four Europeans were murdered. The military restored order and public meetings were declared illegal. But on the 13th of April there was a public meeting in an enclosed space named Jalianwala Bagh. It had only a small opening and high walls on three other sides. General Dyer went there with 90 soldiers, two armoured cars, blocked this exit and without any warning, fire was opened and 1,605 rounds were fired on this assembled crowd. Official figures mention 379 dead and 1,200 wounded. Dyer's action was approved by the Punjab Government. There was some rioting and burning on the next day and the rioters were bombed from an aircraft. People were ordered to crawl on a spot where a woman missionary had been attacked and there were public floggings for minor offences, for failing to *salam* a commissioned officer, even for refusal to sell milk. General Dyer himself spoke boastfully that he wanted to set a ferocious example to the rest of India. But no extremist organisation had been responsible for the riots and the rioters were leaderless. It was an outburst of fury. Though Dyer was removed from the command, the hero of Jalianwala Bagh was supported by many British newspapers in India and in England and a sum of £26,000 was raised as a testimonial to the saviour.. It has been said that 'the last years of British India were ushered in to the sound of General Dyer's guns.'

Mahatma Gandhi

There now emerged on the national scene a new leader with new ideas and new methods to organise opposition to oppression, injustice and denial of India's aspirations. Tilak had given to Congress a militancy which was not there before. But he was old and aged and died in 1920. The new Congress leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had returned from South Africa in December 1915 after winning laurels for his success in the passive resistance movement against the South African Government in favour of Indians in South Africa.

The doctrine of non-violent non-cooperation was derived from Gandhi's principles of *satyagraha*, which is a combination of two

Sanskrit words meaning 'truth' and 'force'. The problem that faced India was: How were the British to be tackled? Gokhale's methods of petitions and resolutions had proved futile. Tilak's method of direct action had proved equally ineffective, for the British were too powerful to be thrown out by force. Gandhiji found a way out of this impasse. Unlike Gokhale he was willing to try non-constitutional means to achieve his ends, but unlike Tilak he did not believe in violence. His method could involve the participation of the masses, which Gandhi felt was morally correct and therefore enduring. The essence of *satyagraha* was Gandhi's belief that no permanent change is society was possible without first changing the character and attitudes of the individuals concerned. Any change by force, without 'a change of heart', was of no value. Gandhiji's political doctrine of *satyagraha* was closely bound up with his social and economic doctrines. He believed that political freedom was dependent on social change, and that both must proceed together. Rule by Indians would not be much better than rule by the British if it were not accompanied by a transformation of society, especially of village life, the life of eighty per cent of the population. (Gandhiji's intense and deep concern with the way India should be governed explains why he often gave up his political work to follow his principles of social reconstruction.)

Gandhiji's *Swadeshi* programme, which was symbolised by the spinning wheel, was mainly directed towards the revival of traditional village life. He wanted to recreate the simple, self-sufficient village of the past, purged of some of their worst features, such as untouchability. It was with the peasants that Gandhiji's heart really lay. His social and economic doctrines appealed directly to the millions of India's peasants and artisans. They responded enthusiastically to his appeal, and enabled him to convert a timid anuual gathering of English-speaking gentlemen into a truly mass movement. At the same time, Gandhiji's doctrine did not alarm the businessmen and merchants who provided Congress with the funds it so badly needed. The programme of *Swadeshi* meant 'buy Indian', and this helped to cut down the competition from British goods. Besides, Gandhi's belief that strikes, because they were violent, were wrong, and that arbitration should replace strikes, also kept the businessmen attached to the Congress.

Gandhiji showed that self-control and self-restraint were as courageous as violent, aggressive action. The use of non-violence demanded great personal sacrifice: it required tremendous courage to offer no

resistance in the face of severe beatings and punishments. *Satyagraha* did not mean lack of struggle, nor was it the method of the coward. Nehru wrote: 'His voice was somewhat different from that of others. Behind the language of peace and friendship there was power.'

In Gandhiji's own words, 'Truth (*satya*) implies love and firmness (*agraha*) and, therefore, is a synonym for force'. He thus began to call the Indian movement *Satyagraha*, i.e. the force which is born of truth and love or non-violence, and gave up the phrase 'passive resistance' in connection with it. Analysing the thirty-one *Satyagraha* movements undertaken by Gandhiji in his lifetime a Gandhian scholar shows that nineteen of them were directed against the Government. In three cases, such as the Champaran Satyagraha (1917), the opponents were British indigo planters. In the Ahmedabad Satyagraha (1918) his opponents were the millowners with whom he had friendly relations. The target for the penitential fast (1925) was his own *Ashram* inmates at Sabarmati. The Hindu–Muslim unity fasts (1947, 1948) were against communal fanatics. All these were like so many saplings from the same seed. And this was the secret of Gandhi's consistency behind his apparent hesitations and waverings.

When the attitude of the Government towards the Amritsar massacre became known, a special session of the Congress was held in 1920 and the Congress decided to adopt a policy of non-cooperation. Under Gandhi's leadership, Congress organisation spread to the village level. There were now excellent organisers who gave great strength to the organisation. For the masses Mahatma Gandhi became the image of Indian nationalism. He wanted the Congress to adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation. The non-cooperation resolution was adopted at the regular session held at Nagpur. Madan Mohan Malavya, Annie Besant, Jinnah and B. C. Pal did not accept this new method of struggle. The goal of the Congress was declared to be *Swaraj* or self-rule. Among the resolutions adopted the most important were those relating to the revival of hand-spinning, hand-weaving and removal of untouchability. This programme had been adopted to a large extent in 1905 in Bengal at the time of the *Swadeshi* movement. But Mahatma Gandhi with his saintliness, his undisputed leadership, with a band of devoted supporters, some of them the finest leaders India has ever produced —C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Vithalbhai Patel, Vallabhbhai Patel, Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Prakasam, Shaukat Ali, Muhammad Ali, Dr. M. A.

Ansari, began this movement on an all-India scale. M. A. Jinnah was a Congress leader up to 1920. The withdrawal of the Moderates did not affect the quality of Congress leadership. 21,000 people attended the Congress session at Nagpur. Besides the items of the programme already stated, it was decided to boycott legislatures, law courts and educational institutions.

The Non-Cooperation Movement

The issues involved in the non-cooperation movement were three-fold. First, it demanded punishment of offenders guilty of unsoldier-like and barbarous behaviour towards the people of Punjab. Secondly, it articulated the Muslim or Khilafat demand for the restoration of the authority of the Turkish Empire as it was before World War I. And thirdly, it aimed at the attainment of *Swaraj* for India.

The methods employed were a combination of negotiations, protest meetings, prayers for self-purification, ultimatums, propaganda through leaflets and newspapers, *hartals*, civil disobidience, boycott and adoption of *Swadeshi* goods, picketing, courting imprisonment, constructive programmes, *Satyagraha* and co-operation with participants in *Satyagraha*. These represented a broader range of methods than those followed by Gandhi in his South African *Satyagraha* movement.

The call for the non-cooperation movement evoked an immediate and enthusiastic response throughout the country. The phrase 'constitutional means' was replaced by 'all legitimate and peaceful means' of attaining *Swaraj*. At the height of the movement many people surrendered their titles and honorary offices. Nominated members resigned from local bodies. Government educational institutions, law courts, legislatures and foreign goods were boycotted. A drive was undertaken to enlist ten million members in the Congress to make it a real mass organisation. Hand-spinning spread and many people became converts to *Khaddar* or handloom fabrics. Encouraged by the movement, the Moplah peasants of Malabar started a forceful anti-*zamindar* movement. The non-cooperation movement was no doubt spreading increasingly among the common people. As a nationalist movement it was unprecendented in volume and scale. No British Government in India had ever had to face such a co-ordinated movement before. In February 1922 the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State in the following terms:

'The lower classes in the towns have been seriously affected by the

non-cooperation movement. In certain areas, the peasantry have been affected . . . the Akali agitation had penetrated to the rural Sikhs. The Mohammedan population throughout the country are embittered and sullen . . .' The Viceroy concluded that the possibilities were grave.

In 1921 Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement presented a united front. But the Khilafat movement with which it was combined became very soon a dead issue because Kemal Pasha forced the Sultan to abdicate. When the Prince of Wales visited India in November 1921 there was almost a complete boycott in Calcutta. The Government in anger declared the Congress Volunteer Organisation illegal. There were mass arrests. C. R. Das with all his close associates including Subhas Chandra Bose were in prison. By the end of the year 1921, with the exception of Mahatma Gandhi all other important leaders were in prison. But his movement had succeeded in giving the country a highly organised party on a nation-wide basis, the tricolour national flag, a uniform policy and an ideology. Khadi became the Congress official uniform. But in February 1922 at Chouri Choura in the U.P. some exasperated villagers set fire to the police station and killed some policemen. Mahatma Gandhi was stunned. His creed of non-violence was violated and he suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement for an indefinite period.

The Baradoli decision, as it was called, came as a shock to many national leaders, including C. R. Das, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose who called it a 'national calamity'.

Lord Reading took advantage of this psychological disappointment of the Congressites, brought a charge of sedition against Mahatma Gandhi for an article in his journal *Young India* and clapped him in prison for six years. C. R. Das compared Mahatma's trial proceedings to the trial of Christ before Pontius Pilate. Generally, the Government, the Viceroy and his Council along with the Home Department of the Government of India had proceeded cautiously. There were people like General Dyer who would not have hesitated to perpetrate another Jalianwala Bagh incident. But they were kept in check. This was an adroit move which finally led to the withdrawal of the movement. For the sympathetic but not activist Indian opinion the movement was also assuming proportions which they could not quite comprehend. Anarchy, chaos and disorder were not mere phantoms in their minds. In this situation Gandhi's united front might have broken down. In any case, Gandhiji himself was feeling his way as

a strategist, and for quite some time it was a war of wits between him and the Government. The withdrawal of the movement could have been interpreted as a failure. But from the standpoint of Gandhi's principle it was an honourable retreat. Despite all criticisms Gandhi remained the ultimate leader and India waited for a signal from him. From the more radical point of view, however, Gandhi had frustrated a genuine mass movement at a time when it was gathering momentum.

The Swaraj Party

A new technique was evolved by C. R. Das while in prison during the non-cooperation movement—non-cooperation within the legislature. According to him no point of vantage should be left to the opponent. Election campaigns would give the Congress an opportunity of doing its own propaganda. Constructive work should go on. Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel and others supported him. The opposition was led by C. Rajagopalachari. After the release of Congress leaders, at the Gaya session of the Congress C. R. Das, though President, was defeated by these No Changers. But Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das now formed what was known as the *Swaraj Party* to carry out their programme. At the special session of the Congress held at Delhi in September 1923 the Swarajists were permitted by the Congress to carry out their programme. They captured all the elected seats in the central and provincial legislatures and all elected seats in local bodies. It may be said in passing that in 1923 Dange in Bombay formed the first group of Communists in Congress held at Delhi in September 1923 the Swarajists were permitted by the Congress to carry out their programme. They captured all the elected seats in the central and provincial legislatures and all elected seats in local bodies. It may be said in passing that in 1923 Dange in Bombay formed the first group of Communists in India. The Swarajists launched their attack on the bureaucracy in the legislature. C. R. Das in Bengal and Motilal Nehru in Delhi kept opposition very much alive. Mahatma Gandhi came to an understanding with these two leaders. He devoted himself to his Khadi campaign and the Swarajists carried on the political campaign. But the government decided to arrest and detain a number of Congress workers of the Swaraj Party under Regulation III of 1818 without any trial. Subhas Chandra Bose, who was then the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation of Calcutta under C. R. Das as Mayor, was sent to Mandalay as a political prisoner. The government must

have thought that he was associated with the terrorists in Bengal. This was in October 1924. The political situation remained unchanged in 1925. But on 16 June 1925 C. R. Das suddenly died. A practical politician, an idealist with the abandon of a *vaisnava* devotee, his five years' role in Indian politics was memorable.

Simon Commission

The Swaraj Party collapsed after his death. The nationalist movement limped. Internal rifts widened. The year 1926 was one of Hindu-Muslim strife. In November 1927 the Viceroy Lord Irwin announced the appointment of an Indian Statutory Commission under Section 84A of the Government of India Act 1919. The Commission was composed of seven members under Sir John Simon as Chairman. One of the members was Major Clement Attlee, destined later to play by far the most important part in British Indian history. It was an all-white Commission, Indians being totally excluded. The Commission was boycotted when it came to India in 1928. As a fitting reply to the challenge an all-parties conference met in Delhi. A committee was constituted to draw up an agreed constitution. It is popularly known as the Nehru Committee. It adopted Dominion Status as the basis of the constitution without restricting the action of those who wanted complete Independence. The constitution was for British India. A future linking up with the Indian States was envisaged. There was to be autonomy for the provinces. It recommended joint electorate with reservation of seats for minorities for ten years, with non-reservation of seats in Bengal and the Punjab. The report enumerated nineteen fundamental rights. M. A. Jinnah opposed the communal settlement and came out with his famous fourteen points which demanded one-third of the elected seats in both houses of the Indian legislature for the Muslims with reservation of seats in Bengal and the Punjab on a population basis. Thus the Nehru Report lost its important all-party character.

Civil Disobedience Movement

The Calcutta session of the Congress was held in 1928 on a colossal scale. Mahatma Gandhi again took over the leadership of the Congress movement. There was tremendous enthusiasm. The next session was held in Lahore in 1929 under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehrū. This session has become memorable in history because Mahatma Gandhi himself moved the resolution demanding India's

Independence. While the Congress thus moved towards the goal of Indian Independence, a revolutionary movement which was active outside the Congress was finding its expression in overt acts of terrorism. The Government started the Lahore Conspiracy Case. Among the prisoners was Jatin Das, a young man of 25, who along with others resorted to hunger strike to secure for political prisoners a more humane treatment in jail than ordinary criminals. The Government refused. He did not falter and died a martyr's death. This Indian Terence Mcswiney had taken a leading part in training Bengal Volunteer Corps for the Congress session in 1928. In 1930 the Congress Working Committee vested Mahatma Gandhi with dictatorial powers for conducting the Civil Disobedience campaign. Though most of the Muslim leaders were opposed to this movement the Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as Frontier Gandhi, supported the movement wholeheartedly. Mahatma Gandhi announced his intention of defying the Salt Act. His celebrated march to Dandi, a sea-coast village, where this civil disobedience was to begin, was to mark the commencement of illegal salt manufacture throughout the country. More than 60,000 civil resisters were thrown into prison. The most ruthless suppression was made of the Red Shirts movement in the Frontier Province led by Frontier Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi was cast into prison in May 1930 under an old Bombay Regulation XXX of 1827.

Round Table Conferences

The Simon Commission had suggested that the constitutional problem and pattern of India should be discussed at a Round Table Conference in London. The suggestion was accepted by the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald and the First Round Table Conference met in November 1930. The Indian National Congress did not join. The Princes attended. The notable proposals that emerged were safeguards, federation and responsible government at the Centre. But Muslim members would agree to federation, safeguards and responsibility if only communal questions were decided to their satisfaction. The British Prime Minister publicly announced his decision to enlist the cooperation of those sections of the people who had not joined the Conference. This was followed by what was known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. After this public appeal for Congress cooperation, Mahatma Gandhi and other

members of the Congress Working Committee were unconditionally released. The Viceroy and Mahatma met and it was agreed to suspend the Civil Disobedience movement, the Congress was to participate in the deliberations of the Conference on the basis of federation, responsibility and safeguards. An investigation would be made into political atrocities. All political prisoners incarcerated in connection with the non-violence movement would be released, their confiscated property would be restored, emergency ordinances would be withdrawn and people living within a certain distance of the sea-shore would be permitted to manufacture salt and peaceful picketing of liquor, opium and foreign cloth shops would also be permitted.

Mahatma attended the Second Round Table Conference on behalf of the Congress in 1931. The communal problem—the Muslims supported by the Europeans—was the main hurdle. Some of the words of Mahatma in the Conference are memorable: 'Though we have not set up any parallel Government, we aspire to displace the existing Government and in due course also to take charge of that Government.'

He urged the appointment by the Government of a judicial tribunal to give a final decision on the communal question. He referred to the unpleasant truth that 'so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class there will be no living solution'. 'It must be the rose of liberty that I want and not the artificial product.' 'Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood?' He added: 'If a further ordeal of fire has to be our lot, I shall approach that with the greatest joy and with the greatest consolation that I was doing what I felt to be right, that the country was doing what it felt to be right.'

On his return from England the Civil Disobedience movement was resumed. But the Government was ready. Within three weeks of Mahatma Gandhi's return to India he was put into prison. The Congress was put on the defensive with almost all leaders in prison—almost every important Congressman. 1,20,000 persons including women were imprisoned during fifteen months. The Government was triumphant. But the mood of the country was sullen and defiant. In the third session of the Round Table Conference which was held in 1932 there was a Communal Award which marked another step in the 'divide and rule' policy. It provided for separate electorates for depressed classes. Mahatma Gandhi commenced his fast unto death

on 20 September 1932 against this vivisection of the Hindu community. Government was prepared to alter it if there was a generally agreed upon practical solution. An agreement was arrived at between all sections of Hindu leaders on 21 September, which did away with separate electorates for the depressed classes. It provided a certain number of reserved seats for them on the basis of a common electorate. But the greatest weightage was given to them in Bengal where the problem hardly existed.

Whatever might be the defects of the Poona Pact it gave a great impetus to the removal of untouchability, though to the world at large it gave this problem a disproportionate advertisement. The fast also side-tracked the political movement. The Government appeared triumphant.

In 1933 the Civil Disobedience movement was suspended by Mahatma. The Government now considered it safe to set him free. Individual civil disobedience took the place of mass civil disobedience. But individual civil disobedience fizzled out. Mahatma Gandhi who had again been put into prison with his immediate entourage was released. Jawaharlal Nehru was released after serving a two-year term. Dr. Ansari and Dr. B. C. Roy called a conference of Congressmen, because Congress could not formally meet. Civil disobedience was withdrawn and it was decided to revive the programme of the Swaraj Party and enter legislature. An all-India committee met at Patna and it was decided to enter the legislature. Government removed the ban on the Congress. The annual session of the Congress was held at Bombay and it was decided to enter legislatures.

The 1935 Act was passed on the basis of Round Table Conference resolutions. A federal structure was to be organised and popular responsible government was to be set up in the provinces. Burma was separated from India. Dyarchy was to be set up in the centre for some reserved subjects, but complete responsible government was to be established in the provinces. The franchise was to be wider. The federal provisions of the Act did not come into force. Mahatma Gandhi had withdrawn from politics in 1934 though his direction and control of Congress activity still continued. Congress contested the election and got an absolute majority in five provinces and formed Congress ministries in eight. Muslim separatist outlook was more clear than ever before. A Congress Parliamentary Board guided Congress policy in all the Congress-governed provinces. Subhas Chandra Bose returned from his enforced exile in Europe. He be-

longed to the left wing of the Congress. But Mahatma Gandhi supported his election as President in 1938. As Congress President he was responsible for two measures, which were very much opposed to Gandhian ideas. He formed a National Planning Committee under Jawaharlal Nehru as Chairman and he formulated a new Economic Policy of Industrialisation. This did not certainly accord with Gandhian economic ideas. He sought re-election in 1939 without Mahatma's support and was elected but he found it impossible to form a Working Committee against the opposition of Mahatma Gandhi. He resigned and formed a left-wing organisation called 'Forward Bloc', though he did not give up his primary membership of the Congress.

Quit India

When war began in Europe in September 1939 the inauguration of the Federal Constitution was postponed for the duration of the war. The Congress Working Committee asked the British Government to declare its war aims. The Viceroy's offer was that he was prepared to establish a 'consultative group' including Indians which would advise the government on war effort. He reaffirmed the pledge of Dominion Status. The Congress Working Committee threatened civil disobedience, but not on a mass scale and Congress governments in eight provinces resigned. But the Congress did not decide its war policy and did not take very effective steps 'with enthusiasm and vehemence'. It was a mild civil disobedience movement. The fall of Singapore in February 1942 forced the British Government to make an effort to win over the Congress. Sir Stafford Cripps came to India in March 1942. But he was in a position to offer only to set up an elected body for framing a new constitution for India upon the cessation of hostilities but any province of British India might refuse to accept the new constitution. With such non-acceding provinces the British Government would be prepared to agree upon a new constitution. This promise, described by Mahatma Gandhi as a 'post-dated cheque', was also an acceptance of the demand for Pakistan. The Congress rejected the Cripps Proposals. On 6 July 1942 the Congress Working Committee finally passed the famous 'Quit India' resolution declaring that 'Britain's rule in India must end immediately'. The Congress decided to launch the Civil Disobedience movement. Mahatma Gandhi expressed his determination to fight to the finish even if he stood alone. The Congress leaders were

all arrested. Thus began a new chapter in India's struggle for independence.

The I.N.A.

Outside India the fight for India's freedom was also being fought. Subhas Chandra Bose was incarcerated in July 1940. He was considered to be a greater threat to British power in India, because he might organise a large scale violent movement. He gave an ultimatum to the British Government that he would fast unto death in prison. The government perhaps thought of Jatin Das's fast unto death and released him with a view to arresting him again. But he succeeded in dodging the secret police watching his residence and after an adventurous journey, crossed the Indian frontier and reached Germany with a view to working for the liberation of India from outside. After the declaration of war by Japan and the defeat of Rommell in the African desert, Germany was eager to find another opening. Subhas Chandra Bose took advantage of this situation. He arrived in Tokyo from Berlin after a perilous journey by submarine and aircraft. He formed an Indian National Army of Indian prisoners of war in Malaya and Singapore. 'Jai Hind'—India for ever—became their war cry. This Indian army of more than 30,000 regulars set foot on the Indian soil. The Congress flag was their flag. This army failed to get adequate Japanese air support and was defeated in the battle of Kohima. Japanese failure in the Burma campaign naturally led to the I.N.A.'s failure. It was said that Subhas Chandra Bose was killed in an air-crash on his way to Tokyo, but many people disbelieved this story. His idea was to open a second and a very different front to help the Gandhian movement in India from outside. Though he failed he made the British feel that they could no longer treat the Indian troops as robots. This consideration must have considerably influenced deliberations in the British ruling circle on the eve of India's independence. A naval mutiny in 1946 must have reinforced this belief.

In connection with the history of the last years of this dying imperialism it would not be irrelevant to refer to the Bengal Famine of 1943. British rule in Bengal began with a disastrous famine (1770) and ended with an equally disastrous famine. This time it was man-made. The supply of Burma rice failed. In 1943 Lord Mountbatten, then Chief of South-East Asia Command, wished to divert some ships to Bengal with foodgrains. But he was told by the authorities in Britain

that the famine in Bengal could not get more than minor priority in the general imperial problems of Britain's war against Germany. The leader of the Indian National Army proposed to send some supply of grain from Burma. No attention was paid to this request. Humanitarian considerations do not perhaps prevail in wars. But Mountbatten certainly knew how much he could afford to divert. The terrible famine was allowed to rage in its full fury.

Lord Wavell succeeded Lord Linlithgow in October 1943. He attempted the formation of a national administration as contempleted in the Cripps Proposals. The sudden ending of the Japanese war in August 1945 set things moving. The Congress Working Committee members were released in June 1945. Negotiations began but there was a breakdown on account of Muslim League's intransigence. In the election of 1945-46 the Congress succeeded in capturing all non-Muslim seats and the majority of Muslim seats in the North-Western Frontier Province and some Muslim seats in U.P. and Bihar. Under Attlee a Labour Government came to power in England in 1945 after the end of the war and the entire look of things changed. It affirmed that its policy was 'to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realisation of full self-government in India'. History rushed forward in a torrent to Indian Independence.

Cabinet Mission

A Cabinet Mission with Sir Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander visited India in April 1946. It made its proposals in May. It still wanted a united India. There was to be a federal union composed of British provinces. The powers of the federal union were to be reduced to defence, foreign affairs and communications and the necessary power to raise requisite finances for the above subjects. The provinces were to enjoy full autonomy in other subjects and all residuary powers would vest in them. Provinces were free to form groups. 'This grouping would give the League the substance of Pakistan.' There was to be a constitution-making body and detailed provisions were made for it. This body would conclude a treaty with Britain in respect of matters arising out of the transfer of power. The states would be free to join the Indian Union. If they joined the Union they would retain all powers not ceded to the Union and their representatives would join the constitution-making body. The Cabinet Mission insisted that there should be an Interim

Government which would enjoy the support of the major political parties.

The plan was accepted by all parties and elections to the Constituent Assembly took place in July 1946. The Congress with its allies could claim 211 members out of a total of 296. The Muslim League captured 73 seats. This alarmed the Muslim League and Jinnah withdrew his acceptance and decided to take recourse to direct action to achieve Pakistan. There was the 'Great Calcutta Killing' of 16 August. The Government of Bengal was then in the hands of the Muslim League. This was the worst communal riot in the whole of British Indian history. There were also bloody riots in Bihar, in East Bengal (Noakhali and Tippera) and the United Provinces. The moral of the Calcutta killing was that there would be Pakistan or Civil War—the worst war of succession in Indian history which has seen so many.

Lord Wavell formed the Interim Government on the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission. Congress nominees took office on 2 September and Jinnah's nominees on 26 October. They formed two blocks. The first session of the Constituent Assembly met on 9 December 1946. The Muslim League refused to join. It spoke against the 'brute majority'. The Labour Party's hope of being able to transfer power to a united India was thus destined to be frustrated.

The British Government at long last fixed a definite date for British withdrawal from India and asked Indians to work out some agreement for the Transfer of Power. The date announced was to be not later than June 1948. But by then there was not even the faintest possibility of an agreement. Lord Mountbatten succeeded Lord Wavell. In his speech on the occasion of viceregal installation he declared that he was there not to maintain British rule in India but to pass it on.

Mountbatten became convinced that Pakistan was the only alternative to anarchy. The Labour Cabinet gave its approval under the stress of circumstances and the principles and procedure were now decided. 14 August 1947 was fixed as the date of British withdrawal. The plan was carried through with remarkable speed. Bengal and the Punjab were partitioned. Pakistan came to have two wings, eastern and western. British paramountcy ended and the old Native States very soon fitted into the system. The merger of the states was a smooth affair. The Native States, like the British Indian Empire,

exist only in history books. Divided India's independence dates from 15 August 1947.

INDIA DIVIDED

Before 1930 no one had heard of Pakistan. In 1947 it was a reality. Thus we may describe it as a rush job. It might be that history was advancing in disguise. Perhaps both these statements are true.

It has been said that after the revolt of 1857 'the English turned fiercely upon the Muhammedans as upon their real enemies'. But this was one of those unreasonable conclusions that so often shape history. The Muslims made the mistake of rejecting English education from the start. They were dominated by men of the 'Kazee description'. Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98) was solely responsible for starting a movement in favour of English education among Muhammedans. He was also responsible for their political revival. The Aligarh Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental School was opened in 1874. It was raised to the status of a college in 1878. This college became the centre of what is described as the 'Aligarh Movement'. In his pamphlet 'Causes of the Indian Mutiny' he succeeded in disproving the Muslim character of the revolt and ascribed it to the Government's exclusion of Indians from its deliberations. He strove to emphasise his faith in the unity of the communities. But after the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 he was a different man. In proportion as the Government became anti-Congress its pro-Muslim trend became more apparent. The Ilbert Bill agitation which had aroused the passions of the British definitely changed their attitude towards the Muslims. Syed Ahmed dissuaded the Muslims from joining it because they were a minority. He belonged to the upper class. He was not very much aware of the fact that a Muslim peasant and a Hindu peasant had identical interests. In 1886 he organised the Muslim Educational Conference which was in fact a political body. He certainly put the community before the country. It was an upper class Muslim movement which he created.

Those Muslims who supported the Congress belonged mainly to Bombay and Madras. Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906) was their leader. In 1887 he became President of the Indian National Congress in its Madras session. The partition of Bengal in 1905 opened a new chapter in the relations between the upper classes of the two communities. Government efforts to accentuate the separatist feeling was started by Lord Dufferin. It might be that he wanted to make British rule

more popular. Separatist political activity received Government encouragement. Curzon's East Bengal tour made him fully conscious of the political effect of weakening a solid band of opponents.

The Government began to widen the gulf. Aga Khan's deputation and the creation of separate electorates have already been referred to. In the development of a 'two-nation theory' the ruling class of Englishmen thus lent a helping hand. This creation of separate electorates may be regarded as the official germ of Pakistan. Religious rivalries and social antagonisms now received political reinforcement. Communalism thus received a good start and it could now thrive of itself. It flowed from the top downwards. The political exploitability of religion was immense in those days.

A religious minority nowhere in the world feels very secure but the historical situation which developed during the years 1930-47 was shaped by personalities. M. A. Jinnah, who is regarded as the founder of Pakistan, was a Congress leader up to 1920. The genesis of separatism should not be traced to him. He was a disciple of Gokhale. He was thus a moderate Congress politician. But a new historical situation rapidly developed. On 30 December 1906 the All-India Muslim League was formed at Dacca. In the context of what happened in that city in 1971 it is one of the ironies of history. The aims of the League were moderate:

1. to promote among the Muhammedans of India a feeling of loyalty to the British Government.
2. to protect and advance the political rights of the Muhammedans of India.
3. to prevent the rise among the Muhammedans of India any feeling of hostility to other communities.

But before this on 1 October 1906 Lord Minto had received a deputation of 35 leading Muslims. The Government was told of the Muslim view of the political situation created by the partition of Bengal and asked that they should be guarded against any political concessions that might be hastily made to the Hindus and which would lead to the ascendancy of a Hindu majority. The League was a Muslim elitist organisation.

Muhammad Iqbal said in 1930 at the Muslim League session at Allahabad: 'To him a constitution of a homogeneous India or to apply to India the principles dictated by British democratic sentiments is unwittingly to prepare her for a civil war.' He defined the

frontiers of the proposed 'consolidated Muslim State which would be in the best interests of India and Islam'. He said, 'I would like to see the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state...the formation of a consolidated North-West India Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of North-West India.'

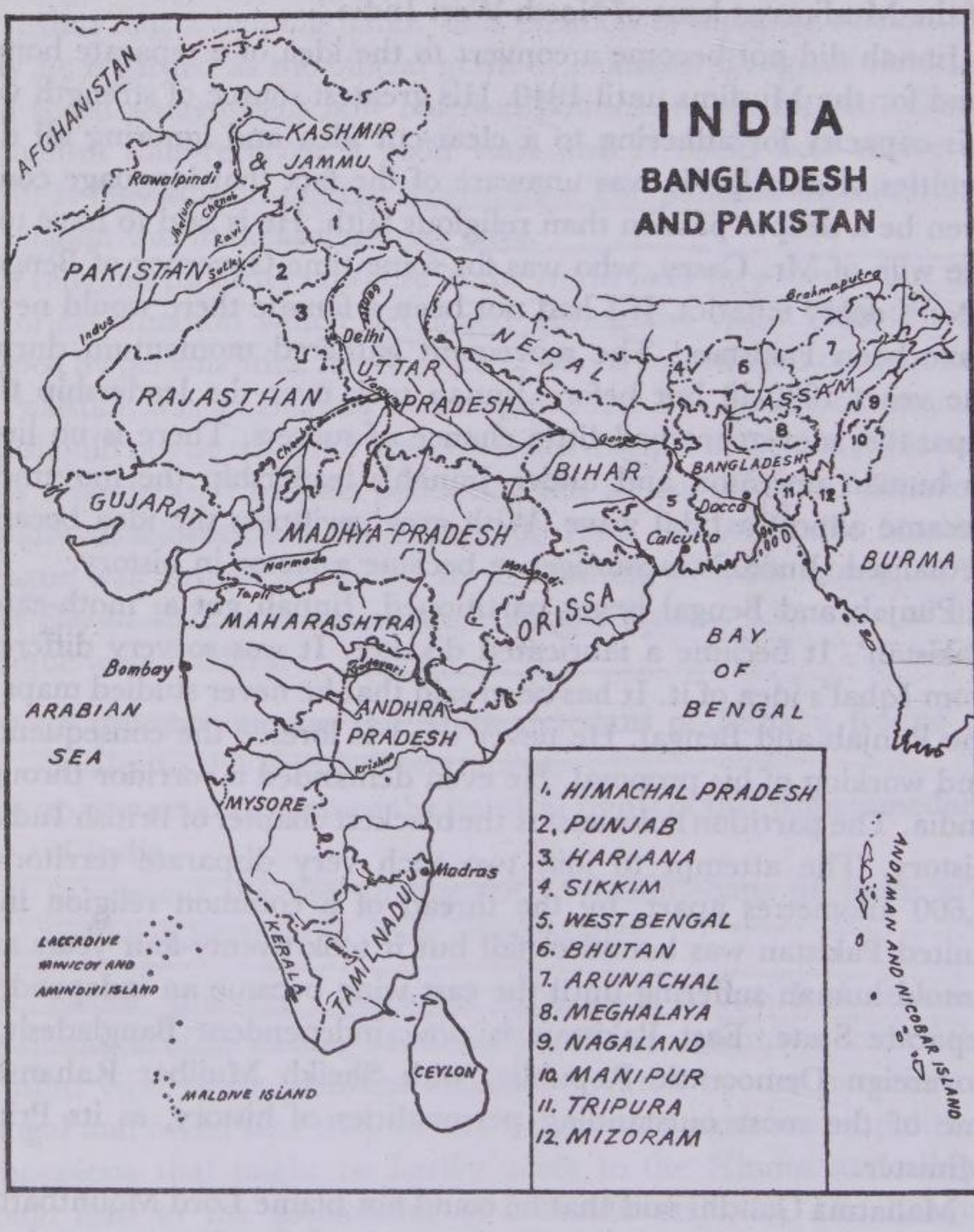
Jinnah did not become a convert to the idea of a separate homeland for the Muslims until 1940. His greatest source of strength was 'his capacity for adhering to a clear-cut idea and ignoring all difficulties of detail'. He was unaware of the fact that language could even be a deeper passion than religious faith. He is said to have told the wife of Mr. Casey, who was for some time Governor of Bengal, 'Don't decry fanatics. If I had not been a fanatic there would never have been Pakistan.' The movement gathered momentum during the years 1930-40 but before Jinnah took over the leadership this separatist movement had little chance of success. There is no limit to human unreason and under Jinnah's leadership the movement became almost a tidal wave. With great swiftness the idea became actualised. Jinnah's intransigence became a factor in history.

Punjab and Bengal being partitioned, Jinnah got a 'moth-eaten Pakistan'. It became a fabricated disaster. It was so very different from Iqbal's idea of it. It has been said that he never studied maps of the Punjab and Bengal. He never tried to foresee the consequences and working of his proposal. He even demanded a corridor through India. The partition holocaust is the blackest chapter of British Indian history. The attempt to join two such very disparate territories, 1,600 kilometres apart, by the thread of a common religion in a united Pakistan was bound to fail but it took twenty-four years and untold human suffering until the east wing became an independent separate State. East Pakistan is now independent Bangladesh, a Sovereign Democratic Republic, with Sheikh Mujibar Rahaman, one of the most outstanding personalities of history, as its Prime Minister.

Mahatma Gandhi said that he could not blame Lord Mountbatten for what had happened. It was the work of the Congress and the Muslim League. The Viceroy had openly said that he wanted a united India but he was powerless in the face of Congress acceptance, however reluctant, of the Muslim position. Some people asked whether Mahatma would undertake a fast unto death in view of the Congress Working Committee accepting division of India. He said that he

was a servant of the country and therefore of the Congress. Was he to fast because the Congress differed from his own views?

The two-nation theory of Muhammad Ali Jinnah is dead. There are now 65 million Muslims in Bangladesh, 55 million in West



Pakistan and 50 million in India. Religion has proved to be the poorest base for erecting a nation. Independent Bangladesh, old East Pakistan, under the inspiring leadership of Sheikh Mujibar Rahaman is a Secular Democratic Republic, the closest ally of India.

CHAPTER FORTY

EMPIRE AND SOCIETY

IT HAS BEEN ARGUED that British rule introduced in India the political framework of the nineteenth-century liberal nation-state. This resulted in a great improvement in internal order and brought about stability and standardisation in the administration. There was a significant improvement in communications through the development of railways and roads. All this stimulated a variety of economic activities and social changes that are characteristic of a process of modernisation. For instance, the land under cultivation expanded substantially, especially through the introduction of small and big irrigation projects. An improved system of internal transport and expanding foreign and domestic markets encouraged what is called a 'regional specialisation of (agricultural) production', leading to a higher average output per acre. A shift from lower to higher value crops occurred in many areas, thus adding to agricultural income. Cash crops like tea, coffee, jute and tobacco and other important crops were introduced. The mining of coal, gold and other minerals was greatly developed. Modern industry made its appearance; factories began creating greater employment opportunities, leading to the concentration of population and the growth of large cities. Cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras became centres of collection and distribution of goods, thus stimulating internal commerce. On the social plane, an extensive system of public schools and colleges, backed by missionary establishments, created a class of people who could act as a catalyst for modernisation.

As against this view the classical line of argument generally takes the following course: colonialism destroyed the traditional base of Indian industry, that is, her handicraft production. The displacement of artisans, especially from the handloom sector, led to a massive shift to agriculture and created a class of landless labourers of an enormous size that was alien to traditional Indian society. High rates of assessment, the payment of revenue in cash and individual responsibility for payments destroyed the self-sufficient village communities which had so far offered social and economic protection to the poorer villagers.

The high duties and other restrictions imposed on the import of Indian goods into Britain and Europe virtually closed the European

market to Indian manufactures after 1820. Cities which had once flourished as manufacturing centres, like Murshidabad and Surat, were practically ruined. The poverty of the country was worsened by the drain of resources from India to Britain, consisting of various payments such as the Home Charges and contributions to the imperial establishment involving expenditures for the British war effort.

The great debate over the economic and social consequences of British rule in India continues and has become a part of a more extensive debate on the role of imperialism in the economic and social development of formerly dependent countries. More data are now available from regional studies done by historians, economists and anthropologists; and the framework for the discussion has gained from the general advance in the study of social sciences.

The basic fact of imperial rule—the priority of home interests above the needs of the dependent countries—has not been altered by new facts and theories. The British, especially, were a practical people. They conquered India by the methods of businesslike warfare, as has been interestingly brought out by some recent works on military history. And they meant business from the beginning. They were free from the religious passions of the Portuguese and the Spanish, leaving religion to take care of itself, and were less concerned about a cultural mission than the French. At the beginning the main objective was to attain a monopolistic trading position. Free trade was later found to be more favourable to British interests, with India becoming a major market for British goods and a source of raw materials. The advocate and architect of Indian railways, R. M. Stevenson, expressed the British point of view with clarity and without hypocrisy. The first consideration, he said, was to facilitate the movement of the military as a means for security with least outlay. The second chief object was to convey from the interior to the nearest shipping ports the rich and varied products of the country, and to bring over and distribute the manufactured goods of Great Britain in exchange.

Colonialism, however, is not a one-way process. It means a situation of contact between two systems representing different forms or levels of economic, technological, social, political and cultural development. The contact takes place in a general set-up where the ultimate source of social, economic and political power resides in the metropolitan society, that is, the society which dominates. How the dependent society reacts to the impact of a more powerful system is a question which cannot be discussed from the angle of colonial exploitation

alone. For example, the dependent country was very likely to have its own internal mechanism of exploitation. Dharma Kumar, in *Land and Caste in South India*, observed that it was the lack of data on the number of agricultural labourers in India in the early British period that had encouraged the belief that this class was small in size on the eve of British rule. And this assumption was connected with the belief that before the British conquest the typical Indian village was inhabited mainly by small peasants tilling their own land. This was the picture of the self-sufficient village drawn by Metcalfe and Maine. After a detailed study Dharma Kumar concluded that the class of agricultural labourers was not wholly created by the British. Even before the coming of the British there was a substantial group of landless labourers at the lowest rung of our village society. And it was peculiar to Indian society that agricultural servitude was a function of caste, that is, people at the lowest strata of caste hierarchy in the village served as landless labourers in a situation similar to serfdom.

Thus, it would be oversimplifying the problem if we treat Indian village society before British rule as self-sufficient rural units free from the rigours of exploitation. The set of responses on the part of the Indian village society to colonial rule was more complex than the conventional presentation of the problem. Anthropologists in recent years have made significant contributions in the field. With the advent of British rule, M. N. Srinivas observes, every village became part of the widest political community then known, that is, the British Empire. As far as possible the British attempted to introduce their judicial ideas and administrative system in all parts of the country. The form and content of the new administrative and judicial system tended to weaken the traditional institutions, such as the village and caste *panchayats*. That it did not substantially weaken the position of the dominant caste is an indication of the slowness of any structural change in rural society. The new system, however, accentuated the operation of the economic factor in society, but its cumulative effect developed slowly.

The most significant factor of economic consequence introduced by the British was the notion of private property in land. In the traditional setup land was not a commodity freely sold and purchased in the market. The British made it an ordinary commodity. The notion of private ownership of land meant that any individual or group with sufficient money could affect the traditional balance in a village,

leading possibly to a change in the hierarchical structure. In other words, a low-caste but rich man might come to wield more power than a high-caste Brahmana by virtue of his ownership of a lot of the village land. This indicated an extension of the economic frontier. The conscious exertions of the British rulers to follow up the new administrative and legal notions ceased or weakened after a certain stage and as a result the possibilities of change at the rural level slackened or even got retarded. It was typical of the British not to press their ideas very far in the face of vested interests.

A consequence of the extension of the economic frontier was migration from rural areas. The traditionally literate social groups tended to be attracted to an urban life because of the growth of new professions in an expanding bureaucracy and modern business establishments, as well as increasing opportunities in trade and commerce. The attraction was at first slow to develop. A proverb in Kannada says: 'after ruin go to the city'. It meant that a man who had lost his property in the village and could make no living there could find work and earn a living in the city. It implied that as long as it was possible to live in the village no one could think of going to the city. A similar state of mind prevailed in other regions. Yet great cities, especially Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, continued to gain by migration throughout the period of British rule. Census Reports from 1872 indicate this. Summing up the situation towards the end of the British rule, the *Report on the Census of India 1941* observed that urban life had begun to really appeal to ordinary middle class and lower middle class Indians because accommodation within their means and to their taste had become available along with electricity, transport and entertainments.

While city life attracted people above a certain economic and social level, the average villager or poorer agriculturist was often forced to leave his village because of a failure of crops, death of his bullock or debts to the moneylender. He wished to return to the village as early as possible. Even while the immigrant lived in an industrial city his outlook remained essentially rural. Thus every big city in India, notably Calcutta and Bombay, had (and still has) a large population of what has been called urban villagers, often poised uneasily between urban and rural life. While they tended to retard urbanisation, weakening, for example, the formation of an organised urban working class and the facilities for urban living, they also served as links between the city and the village, bringing some urban

attitudes to the village and introducing some social mobility there.

A significant process of migration in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century occurred from the villages of U.P. and Bihar to Calcutta and the surrounding industrial region. This assumed such proportions that sometimes whole industrial townships would be peopled or at least dominated by them. This brought relative well-being to certain areas in Bihar and U.P., for example the Bhojpuri-speaking tracts, since remittances of a large part of their salaries were a regular feature of such a migration. The families benefiting from such remittances would have an improved economic status in their villages and would have the surplus to invest in land. Transfers of land were facilitated by the British law of mortgage. The British system also strengthened the class of moneylenders, the so-called rural capitalists, whose surplus could be increased by the migrant male's earnings.

Transfers of land to the more enterprising families and the rise of the so-called rural capitalist were looked upon, by some British administrators, as constituting a progressive trend. But this seed of progress generally failed to sprout. The rural moneylender hardened to form the single factor most responsible for rural indebtedness and this became a feature of backward agriculture. However, certain owner-cultivator social groups consolidated their economic position, rising in the social scale and forming a kind of rich peasantry. They moved into the gap left by the more tradition-oriented landowning class. The caste component was of considerable significance in this process, especially in North India and certain parts of the South. Military service, transport facilities and the temptation to exploit employment opportunities helped encourage mobility, though in an uneven manner.

The phenomenon of the moneylender as a rural capitalist shows the imperfection of the capital market in a situation where agricultural production was becoming increasingly dependent on the supply of capital in response to the expanding area of demand. The money-lender generally belonged to the non-producing classes and strove to become rentiers in a society which put great value on such a status. Such a choice on the part of the rural capitalist indicated a situation where economic forces, such as the pressure of the market, tended to work on a diffuse rather than an intensive scale, almost skimming over the surface of the rural society and thus leaving most of the structural elements alone. When economic forces do not work fast

enough many of the old attitudes and ideas tend to survive, intensifying the pull of tradition on economic forces. That was what generally happened in Indian society during British rule. While the village gentry generally benefited from the security of a regular income and in some areas, such as those covered by the Permanent Settlement, by a reduced tax burden, the mass of the people tended to suffer from increasing income inequalities and by a decline in customary values of social obligations to poor relatives or neighbours, described as 'shared poverty'. The social hierarchy in a village underwent no substantial change. At the top was the dominant caste of landlords and landowners, then an intermediate group of artisans and tenants, followed by groups of labourers of low status and untouchables working at vital but degrading jobs. The landowning families generally attempted to follow the lifestyle of the traditionally leisured class. This inhibited productive investment, but also brought substantial portions of weak land under cultivation for an immediate rent income.

Improvements in internal transport and public order and the growth of foreign as well as domestic markets encouraged regional specialisation of production, that is, more production than was needed for bare subsistence, especially through a higher output per acre. A shift to crops earning a higher value was made possible in such a situation. Such developments, however, could not go far to change the total situation. While certain areas, such as those in Bombay, the Deccan and Berar, benefited from the cotton boom of the 1860s, they remained isolated 'pockets' in an overall depressed situation. Production in irrigated areas, particularly in the Punjab and Sind, registered spectacular increases. But the overall food production of India remained almost stationary from the late nineteenth century. Small holdings, lack of improvements in production techniques, the land tenure system with its lack of incentives to the producer, kept the marketable surplus quite small; and that too was vulnerable to price fluctuations. The total picture that emerges from whatever data are available is that throughout the period 1893 to 1946 population rose three times as fast as total agricultural output. While there was a perceptible rise in the output of commercial crops this could not compensate for the fall in the total food crop production per capita. The picture then is not one of stagnation but of a generally depressed situation in which commercialisation could do little more than create enclaves of relative prosperity. The dependence on market forces could even lead to disasters such as the famines which plagued

the Indian economy throughout the late nineteenth century. The shift from food to commercial crops could, in such a situation, even reveal some negative features.

Throughout the period the imperial government was contented to play the role of the night watchman, generally looking after public order. With government playing an increasing role in the relatively advanced countries from the late nineteenth century, the role of the night watchman on the part of the government in India, in other words a policy of *laissez-faire*, acted as a 'disincentive' to economic development when carried beyond reasonable limits. By 1885 India, it seems, was politically united—a nation, thanks no doubt to the model of the liberal nation-state introduced by the Empire itself. The presence of a colonial government after this development had taken place was an obstacle. As long as it gave priority to home interests above those of India's it retarded the growth of India's economy and the modernisation of her society. As late as 1936 more than half of Government spending was for the military, justice, police and less than three per cent for agriculture. Between 1921 to 1938 the total drain of money to Britain from India on account of government pensions and interest charges, private remittances and savings, and a third of the commerical profits amounted, according to one computation, to about 1.5 per cent of the country's national income. Towards the end of the British rule this absorbed a quarter of the Indian savings, according to Maddison in *Class Structure and Economic Growth.* And this went out of the productive stream of the Indian economy, causing a loss of foreign exchange that could have been used for the import of capital goods.

The growth of the modern industrial sector during British rule was no doubt a positive development in the colonial era. The physical and financial infrastructure in the form of railways and banking was relatively highly developed despite the colonial context. Similar developments had not occurred during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the non-Western world outside Japan. The evidence of Indian entrepreneurs before the Industrial Commission of 1916–17 generally represents a forward outlook. There was a keen awareness of more and more possibilities. To realise them more institutional and governmental support was felt to be necessary. There was some confidence in the scientific and technological skills of Indians; at least, no diffidence was felt on this score. The education system was criticised for its liberal-cultural bias and for producing theoretical,

bookish men. That itself was significant. The colonial system of education, as an appendage of the British system, was felt to offer a limited scope for skill formations. A new world was opening. The *Swadeshi* era had brought about significant changes in the consciousness of India's needs. But the organisation was not growing fast enough—a new organisation was needed which could accommodate this consciousness. This was the persistent theme, almost a ceaseless refrain, in social thinking from the *Swadeshi* era to the outbreak of the Second World War. The achievements of the Indian textile industry, the export of Indian manufactured goods and the beginnings of a chemical and pharmaceutical industry stimulated the imagination of educated Indians. Comparisons between India and Japan, and India's capacity to rival her, have come in for repeated comments.

At the operational level, however, the modern sector worked under constraints basically related to the colonial context. The initiative here lay firmly with the foreigners. Foreign capital and foreign managing agencies dominated industry, private finances and foreign trade. Daniel Thorner, a careful observer of the Indian scene, described that role as quasi-monopolistic. Indians desiring to enter fields in which British managing agencies already operated had to place themselves under the protection of one of their houses. Till Independence British shipping lines operated without rivalry in the Indian coastal trade. Even in the port city of Bombay, where Indian business enterprise was particularly in evidence, there were forces at work which facilitated the commercial dominance of foreign business houses. After 1870 a growing proportion of the profits earned in the export of raw cotton, India's leading cash crop, went to foreign firms, while earlier a large proportion of the profits had been acquired by local merchants. So, there was a structural change in the export community to the detriment of Indian merchant capital as late as the end of the nineteenth century.

In the context of the total economic activity in the country the role of the modern sector was quite limited. The great bulk of foreign capital investment was in transport, and extractive and processing industries. This tended to create enclaves with limited general effects. The total factory labour in 1905 was 1.92 million persons out of a total population of about 300 million; in other words, less than one per cent of the total population. Between 1881 and 1911 the percentage of the male working force employed in manufacturing and mining actually declined. The urban population remained almost

constant from 1870 to 1911 at around nine per cent. It increased slowly to fourteen per cent in 1941. And most of this population was concentrated in a few big cities and the industrial belt around them. Urbanisation could thus have had only a very limited impact on society as a whole.

Yet, despite a constrained and limited modern sector, changes were taking place in the choice of occupations open to individuals. Social anthropologist Nirmal Kumar Bose has described this scope for choice as different from what was prescribed by caste traditions. A new system of production had started relaxing the hold of traditional ties enforced by a predominantly village society. Colonialism produced conflicts; it disturbed the relatively calm surface of the traditional society and encouraged the development of a sense of growing opportunities. It wrought certain changes in the class structure which reflected, not surprisingly, some elements of the dominant, imperial society. In India the new order was brought in by cutting off a sizeable part of the old upper class—the Mughal–Maratha–Rajput aristocracy—and replacing it with the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and the military which were overwhelmingly European. At the intermediate levels Indians from new professions, trade and commerce tended to move in. It is these intermediate groups that achieved a degree of consolidation under the complex developments of the colonial era. And its general pattern was directly influenced by the Western model. With the passage of time some of these groups moved up and formed the new upper class of India. A larger number of these groups would look upon themselves as middle class. Jawaharlal Nehru graphically described their aspirations and their image of themselves: 'The rising middle classes were politically inclined and were not so much in search of a religion; but they wanted some cultural roots to cling on to, something that gave them an assurance of their own worth, something that would reduce the sense of frustration and humiliation that foreign conquest and rule had produced.'

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

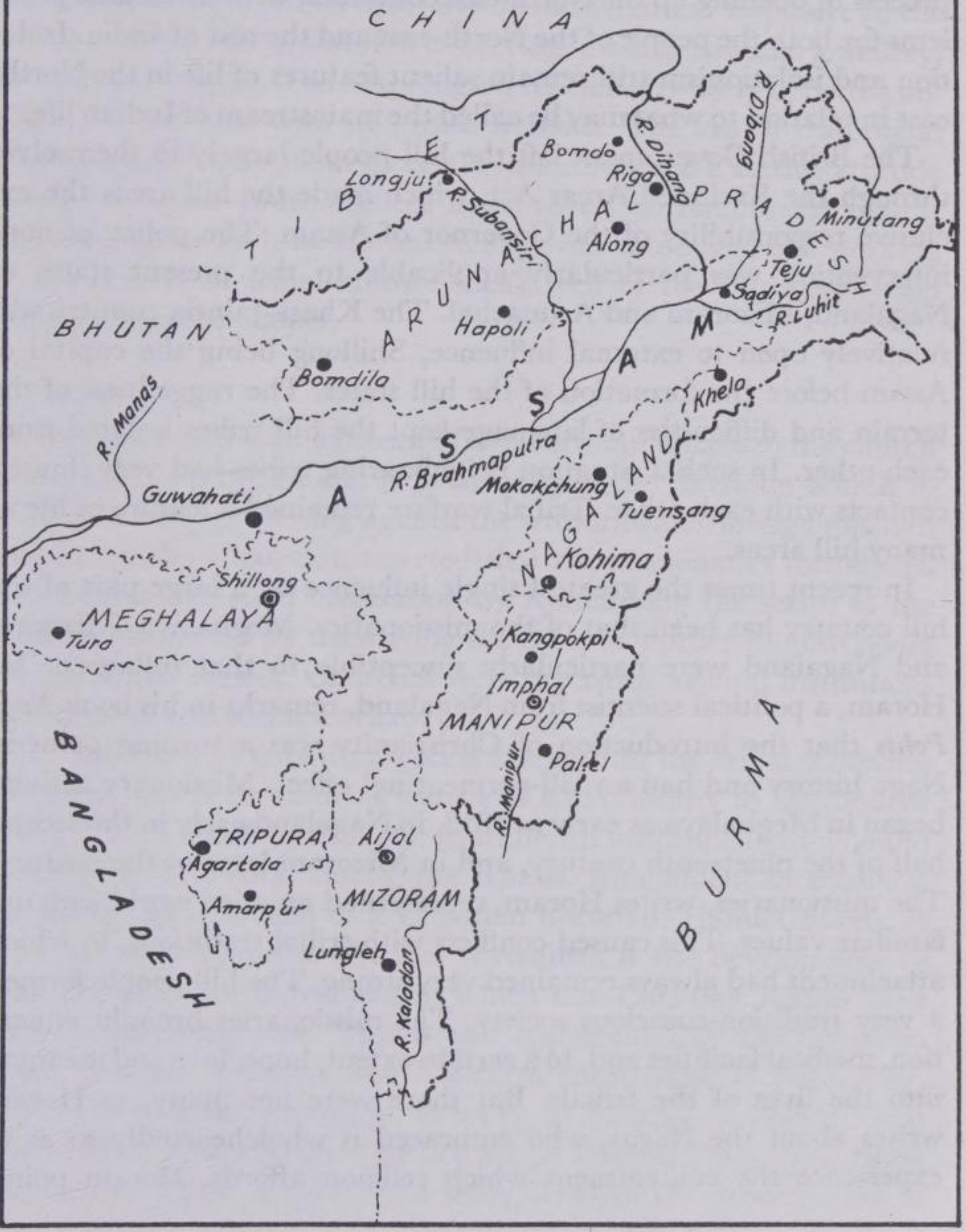
THE NORTH-EAST—ASPECTS OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY

THE NORTH-EASTERN PART of India is the home of people who are known as the Indo-Mongoloids. In his *Kirata-Jana-Kṛti, The Indo-Mongoloids: Their Contribution to the History and Culture of India*, Suniti Kumar Chatterji presents a panoramic view of the linguistic and cultural history of the Indo-Mongoloids from very early times. Professor Chatterji makes an attempt to generalise on the ethnic character of the Indo-Mongoloids in terms of their temper and habits, without being dogmatic or biased. The Indo-Mongoloids, according to him, have qualities of great optimism and cheerfulness of temper, combined with a *bonhomie* and a camaraderie that come from a sense of happy-go-lucky freedom. 'A habit of indolence, after the immediate needs are satisfied, seems to be present as an occasional characteristic, but when roused to action, they are capable of concerted and sustained work. . . . They have also an innate sense of decoration and colour and of rhythm. In the blankets and loin-cloths they weave, there is a harmonious combination of colours—scarlet reds, and blacks, and yellows and blues, sometimes with geometrical patterns. Dance as an art is well-developed among them. . . . They like mimicry; and on the basis of this, where they have developed the drama, they take to it with great enthusiasm. . . .'

Chatterji's generalisation on the 'character of the Indo-Mongoloids' may be supplemented by the enumeration of certain traits of culture, widely diffused in India's North-eastern region though not present in every tribe. In 1925 W. E. Smith, a Christian missionary and sociologist, described these characteristies in his *Ao Naga Tribes of Assam*. Among the dominant traits mention may be made of head-hunting, common sleeping-houses for bachelors, houses built on posts and piles, aversion to milk and milk products, a sort of trial marriage or sexual freedom before marriage, absence of a powerful political organisation, the simple loom for weaving cloth, a large quadrangular or hexagonal shield, and settlement in hilly regions, practising a crude form of agriculture. Great changes, however, have been sweeping over India's North-east since the early nineteenth century. An important landmark was the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826), by which the king of Burma promised to abstain from interference in Assam, Cachar and

NORTH EAST INDIA

MEGHALAYA ARUNACHAL PRADESH
NAGALAND MANIPUR MIZORAM



Jaintia, territories which thus came practically under British rule. The changes were uneven, but, considering the fact that the North-east was to a considerable degree isolated from the rest of India and relatively immune from external influences (the Ahom country, Manipur and to some extent Meghalaya may be exceptions), they were great indeed. The last territory to be influenced by this process of change was Arunachal, the former NEFA, the headquarters of which could be reached till 1957 only by a long and arduous march for many days over steep mountainsides and through deep gorges. The process of opening up the North-east continues, with attendant problems for both the people of the North-east and the rest of India. Isolation and isolationism still remain salient features of life in the North-east in relation to what may be called the mainstream of Indian life.

The British Government left the hill people largely to themselves through the Excluded Areas Act, which made the hill areas the exclusive responsibility of the Governor of Assam. The policy of non-intervention was particularly applicable to the present states of Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal. The Khasi–Jaintia country was relatively open to external influence, Shillong being the capital of Assam before the formation of the hill states. The ruggedness of the terrain and difficulties of language kept the hill tribes isolated from each other. In such a situation neighbouring tribes had very limited contacts with each other. Tribal warfare remained a feature of life in many hill areas.

In recent times the greatest single influence on a large part of the hill country has been that of the missionaries. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland were particularly susceptible to that influence. M. Horam, a political scientist from Nagaland, remarks in his book *Naga Polity* that the introduction of Christianity was a turning point in Naga history and had an 'all-permeating' effect. Missionary activity began in Meghalaya as early as 1813, in Nagaland early in the second half of the nineteenth century, and in Mizoram later in the century. The missionaries, writes Horam, represented an alien world with unfamiliar values. This caused conflicts with tribal traditions, to which attachment had always remained very strong. The hill people formed a very tradition-conscious society. The missionaries brought education, medical facilities and, to a certain extent, hope, love and meaning into the lives of the tribals. But there were not many, as Horam writes about the Nagas, who embraced it wholeheartedly so as to experience the contentment which religion affords. Horam points

out that 'life in the hills is not exactly easy and the monotony of the daily round is relieved by feasts and festivals, the main features of which are meat, rice, beer, tobacco, singing and dancing'. One is reminded here of Chatterji's description of the 'character' of the Indo-Mongoloid people.

Government intervention and missionary persuasion stopped head-hunting and inter-tribal wars. But the culture of the hills, with its feasting, drinking and dancing and a rich oral tradition, was severely shaken. The 'admirable institution of Bachelors' Houses' (*morangs*) fell into disuse, being frowned upon by the missionaries. 'Exposure to the outside severely affected skills like carving, making costume jewellery, dancing and singing. The new religion reacted adversely upon the old religion of the hills with its joyous festivals. The loss of traditional delights has brought about a certain listlessness and a restive attitude among the tribal youth.' There is, however, no resentment against the missionaries and, as Horam notes, even those who are working for the revival of tribal culture speak well of the Europeans who brought them the Gospel.

Meghalaya

In Meghalaya the attachment of the Christian Khasis to the church organisation is quite strong. At a meeting of the Christian Khasis in Shillong in 1969, protesting against the withdrawal of foreign missions from India, the Chairman asserted that the missionaries introduced the Khasis to Western civilisation by Romanising the script of the Khasi language and by translating the Bible and other English books into the Khasi dialect. Churches were described as vital institutions for education and social services.

Yet, the spirit of tribalism, giving strength to the tribal solidarity movement, has been a salient feature of Khasi history in the modern period. This is noted by P. R. G. Mathur, an anthropologist who did considerable fieldwork among the Khasis. Attachment to tradition also marks the approach of a Christian historian, Hamlet Bareh, to Khasi history. An index of tribal revivalism is the development of Khasi literature—a movement in which non-Christian Khasis have taken up a leading role. This is also appreciated by the Christian Khasis. Brahmo influence from Calcutta encouraged U Jibon Roy, the pioneer of Khasi literature, to set up at Shillong in 1895 the first press to print Khasi books. The first Khasi book, written by U Jibon Roy, was on Khasi religion. The main trend of the development of

Khasi literature from the early twentieth century is represented by books on Khasi customs, religious rituals, social usages, legends, folklore, old practices and observances, Khasi ethics and political organisation, and the great Khasi freedom movement. Attachment to the old life and ways of his people characterises the writings of Soso Tham, known as 'the Khasi Wordsworth', whose first work appeared in 1925. S. K. Chatterji, in his book mentioned earlier, gives a résumé of Khasi literary history, indicating the modernisation of 'an interesting and important language of the Austric Family in India'. The Khasi language is spoken by the Khasis proper in the western part of Meghalaya and by the Jaintias (*syntengs*) in the east. Racially Mongoloids, they adopted the Austric-Khasi language in very early times, possibly from their predecessors in the area.

A prominent theme in modern Khasi literature and an indication of the hold of tradition is the story of U Tirot Singh, the Syiem (ruler or chief) of Nongkhlaw State, who sought to defend the freedom of his territory against the British during 1829–33. He was treacherously captured by the British and imprisoned at Dacca. The British offered to release him, provided he accepted the status of a figurehead. He refused and died in prison. Hamlet Bareh quotes his last words spoken on the eve of his death: 'I have a feeling that the sun of life is about to set. I still see my hut under the roof where I was brought up. This soul of mine shall fly from the iron rods like a wild bird that takes its flight from its cage. Promise me that you shall not forget to carry my bones and lay them down to rest side by side with the remains of my ancestors underneath the cromlechs at Nongkhlaw.' Among the qualities of 'character' of the hill people, pride and attachment to the soil, however difficult life may be in the rugged country, are quite perceptible.

Tribal solidarity, as distinguished from intra-tribal conflicts, is a modern trend. Among the Khasis the sense of solidarity is strong enough to overcome the religious differences between the Christians and the so-called *pucca* Khasis. Controversies do occur, as it did some years ago over Pomblang Nongrem, the very traditional annual goat-killing ceremony accompanied by dancing. The Christians finally participated though they alleged, as P. R. G. Mathur notes, that the *pucca* Khasis mix up Hindu religious practices with the Khasi religion. The Khasis came under Hindu influence from Bengal through the Jaintias, and from the Assamese Hindus in the north.

History or historical revitalisation, observes Mathur, plays a vital

role in Khasi political movements. The Syiems, some of them Christian, still command respect and influence. The traditional political units represented by the clan and the village are integral parts of the state. Exposure to external forces does not necessarily lead to awareness, even among the educated, of the formal source of authority situated at a distance and represented by modern political institutions. This is possibly the general trait of political life in the North-east. In the cases of the Khasis, however, the tribal political movement has not led to a situation in which secession or insurgency has become a feature of political life. Freedom from exploitation by outsiders and an approach to the special problem of backwardness in hill areas with their limited resources, need for higher calories in food, lack of communication and local inflationary trends are the main political demands. The political situation of Meghalaya thus differs from the more charged atmosphere in Nagaland and Mizoram.

Nagaland

The Nagas are divided into a number of tribes, such as Aao, Tangkhul, Sangtam, Yachumi, Chang, Phom, Angami, Memi, Maram, Sema, Rengma, Lotha, Kacha, Zemi, Lyengmi, Marongmai, Kabui and Konyak. They use their tribal names to identify themselves and not the word Naga—an appellation given to them by outsiders. However, for the sake of convenience we too have used the word Naga to describe all these tribes which, though differing from one another in language and sometimes in customs, have common traits distinguishing them from other groups of tribes and people. The Naga tribes of Manipur are in a special category and are in many respects more advanced than the other Naga tribes. Horam writes that political awareness among the Nagas has grown and spread from the educated section through the semi-educated down to the illiterate. The Japanese invasion of 1944 is a watershed in Naga history. The Nagas found themselves almost in the mainstream of contemporary history. And this made them conscious of their own backwardness, encouraging a process of unification among the different tribes. At the time of Independence Naga nationalism as represented by Angami Zapo Phizo and his followers went so far as to claim a sovereign status for the Naga territory. The rest of India, with the possible exception of Assam, was totally unfamiliar to the Nagas. Today, as Horam notes, the situation is more complicated than when the underground alone represented Naga political consciousness. The average Naga now

finds himself caught between the official State Government and the underground. The result is a human tragedy which makes him earnestly long for a solution. On the question of sovereignty Horam says, 'feelings and opinions . . . are constantly changing'. Years of bloodshed have, however, politicised the Nagas.

At the social level Naga society represents a twin trend that can also be observed in almost all other tribal groups in the North-east. There is, on the one hand, a movement for tribal solidarity rising above the divisions of clan and village; and, on the other, a tendency towards stratification on economic lines between the rich and the poor. The affluence of a few is causing maladjustment among those who, though educated, remain unemployed or in straitened circumstances. While consumer goods abound, the majority of the Nagas do not have 'a surplus big enough to buy other things besides salt and yarn for weaving'. In this respect, the problems of the Nagas, the Khasis or the Mizos remain basically the same as in the rest of India.

Mizoram

The phenomenon of social maladjustment is heightened in Mizoram, again, by a very late exposure to outside influence accompanied by a high rate of literacy—about fifty-nine per cent. Missionary enterprise in the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) started in 1894. As Lal Biak Thanga writes in his work *The Mizos—A Study in Racial Personality*, the missionaries gave the alphabet to the Lusei dialect and the Roman script was adopted for the purpose. Thus, from the very beginning the Mizos had the advantage of education through a common language. Both the Government and the missionaries encouraged the spread of primary and middle level education.

The process of opening up the Mizo country was very slow till almost the time of Independence. In the nineteenth century it occurred through punitive expeditions by British forces following Mizo raids into the plains. The Mizos expected gifts from the zamindars when they visited the plains. They were more powerful than their neighbours. In a single raid on a Manipur colony in the Sylhet district in 1844 some twenty heads and six captives were taken. Missionaries, however, played a key role in bringing the Mizos in touch with the modern world.

Arunachal Pradesh

The most isolated and the most remote of the hill areas in the

North-east is Arunachal Pradesh, formerly called North-East Frontier Agency. In *Arunachal Panorama* J. N. Chowdhury presents a broad survey of the region. Throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century the British did not seriously attempt to consolidate their administration over the region. They maintained a loose control over the tribal groups inhabiting one of the most difficult terrains in the world, separated from each other by high mountain ridges and deep gorge-like valleys and torn apart by frequent tribal conflicts.

The history of Arunachal goes back hundreds of years into the mists of tradition and mythology. The main tribes—the Monpas, Sherdukpens, Daflas (Nishis), Hill Miris, Apa Tanis, Adis (former Abors), Mishmis, Noctes, Singhphos, Khamtia, etc.—have been settled here from time immemorial. There is evidence of an interaction with Indian culture, particularly along the lower reaches. As Chowdhury observes, the archaeological ruins are strongly associated in the popular mind with stories and myths related in the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*. Later on, till almost recent times, Arunachal tended to remain isolated from the mainstream of Indian culture. British policy and the Inner Line Regulations contributed significantly to this isolation. Situated on the international border with Tibet, Bhutan and Burma, Arunachal is one of the most sensitive areas in the country.

The main concentration of the Monpas, as Chowdhury describes, is around Tawang, where the great Lamasery, founded over 350 years ago, stands as the centre of the spiritual and cultural life of the people. This is by far the biggest monastery in India. To Verrier Elwin it looked like a medieval Italian town or in many ways like the typical old Oxford jumble of little streets lined with impressive houses.

The Lishpas and the Chugpas are two small groups of people akin to the Monpas and living close to them but speaking a different language. Such philological puzzles, as Chowdhury notes, are not rare in this North-eastern region of India.

The Sherdukpens, another important tribal group, follow a religion that is 'a curious blend of Buddhism and local beliefs'. The religion of the Akas has been described as 'Shamanistic animism'. Any young man of 'supernatural capability' may become a priest or a Shaman. The Akas used to lead leisurely lives while the Khoas, a small tribal group, worked for them. It is also a philological puzzle that the Khoas speak a different language from the traditionally dominant Akas.

The Daflas (Nishis), Chowdhury observes, are a sturdy hill people who lived precariously on an unbountiful land. Till recently they were noted for their turbulence. Elwin remarks that though they have settled down to a peaceful life, their appearance, with their hair tied in a knot above the head, remains proud and dignified. In the past they used to raid Apa Tani villages where people followed an advanced agricultural technique, different from the *jhuming* or cyclic method of shifting cultivation pursued by most other tribes. Now the Daflas and Apa Tanis live in 'close economic symbiosis'—the Daflas procure cloth and rice from the Apa Tanis who get cotton and other goods in exchange.

The Noctes and Wanchoos were noted for head-hunting. They believed in the magical efficacy of the skulls, the human head forming the central motif of their traditional wood carvings. Head-hunting accompanied or followed strifes between tribal chiefs. With better transport and communications significant changes are occurring among these tribes.

The Garos

While isolationism is a salient feature of the history of the North-east, especially in relation to the Nagas, Mizos and the tribes of Arunachal, expansion, assimilation and interaction have characterised the Boro tribes, who are spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and North as well as East Bengal, forming a solid bloc in North-eastern India. Chatterji considers them to be the most important Indo-Mongoloid people in Eastern India, forming one of the main bases of the present-day population of these tracts. At present, however, there are scattered blocs of Boro speech in the Garo Hills, Tripura and parts of Cachar and Assam. A powerful movement to establish their language and culture has started among the Boros of the Assam valley. There is a strong demand for instruction in the Boro language in schools and colleges, supported by a literary movement with its emphasis on Boro folk poetry and tales. Among the tribes of Boro origin the Garos of Meghalaya form a relatively compact bloc. Christian influence has been very strong among them and has helped the process of education and political articulation. The Garo National Council was born in 1935 and took an important part in the formation of the Eastern India Tribal Union, first called the Assam Hill Tribal Union, in 1954. The movement finally led to the formation of the Hill States, which has been described as 'a triumph

of tribal genius'. The Garos, now particularly articulate, were relatively isolated among the Boro tribes and it was possibly this which helped them maintain their distinct identity. The comparative isolation of the Garos, according to Chatterji, is suggested by the Yogini Tantra, which calls the Garo Hills 'Manda-saila', from Garo *mandi* = 'man', the national name of the Garos for themselves.

In his study of the Indo-Mongoloids Chatterji has been particularly concerned with the process of Hinduisation or assimilation to Sanskrit culture undergone by the tribes of the North-east. He qualifies this general approach by statements which describe the other process too, in terms of the influence of the Indo-Mongoloids in the direction of an Indian synthesis. He would even consider it possible that the Buddha was an Indo-Mongoloid. However, Chatterji's overwhelming concern has been the evolution of a synthesis in which Hinduisation or Sanskritisation plays a dominant role.

In our present survey we have not so far been able to use the concept of Hinduisation or Sanskritisation with any particular emphasis. In fact, de-Sanskritisation can be an alternative concept, and synthesis in the traditional sense may not be the dominant process now. Christianity remains a strong influence and tribal solidarity movements may not take a favourable view of the once-dominant process of Hinduisation. From the standpoint of Hinduisation the Meitheis or Manipuris, a branch of the Kuki-Chin people with kinsmen in Burma, played a particularly significant role.

Manipur

The early history of the Manipuris is obscure. The Manipuris have a list of forty-seven kings up to 1714. This early history is blended with the traditional myths and legends of the Meitheis. The Manipuris would trace back the process of Hinduisation to a remote antiquity. Chatterji thinks that they might have entered the Hindu fold in the eighth century A.D. The Manipuris developed an alphabet based on the Indian system. A rich literary tradition grew up in old Manipuri but knowledge of the alphabet remained confined to the Maibas or the priests of the old Manipuri religion. From the middle of the eighteenth century, with the conversion of their king to Vaishnavism, the Manipuris adopted the Bengali–Assamese script. The influence of North Indian Vaishnavism can also be traced to the same time through missionaries of the Ramanandi school. The beginning of this new phase in Manipuri culture is associated with Pomheiba (1709–

48), also known as Gopal Singha or Gharib Nawaz. The last great ruler of Manipur was Chingthang-Khomba or Bhagya-Chandra Jaya Singha (1759–98), who popularised the famous Manipuri Rasa dance with the help of his daughter, Maharajkumari Bimbavati. Bimbavati synthesised the traditional Manipuri religious dance—the Lai-haoraba, the Dance of Creation and Thanksgiving—with the Radha–Krishna legend. 'A syncretism of the old pre-Hindu Meithei religion, mythology and ritual with the Hindu Brahmanical (Puranic) religion, mythology and ritual started very early (in Manipur); and with the friendly co-operation of the Maibas and Maibis . . . on the one hand, and the Brahmans and Vaishnavas, on the other, for some centuries, gave to Manipur its own distinctive form of Hinduism' (Chatterji).

Modern Manipuri literature began to develop from the early nineteenth century with the beginning of English education, especially at the school level. Translations from Sanskrit, Bengali and English brought a new perspective into Manipuri literature which thus acquired the content and form of a modern Indian literature. Society and literature in Manipur furnish an interesting example of modern trends in a tribal society in the North-east.

Assam

In terms of association with the mainstream of Indian civilisation Assam proper or the Brahmaputra Valley holds a unique position in the North-east. In the epics it is mentioned as Pragjyotisha and in the *Puranas* as Kamarupa. References to Kamarupa or Pragjyotisha occur in Varahamihir's *Brihatsamhita* and Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa*. The early history of Kamarupa goes back to the fourth century A.D. with its mention in the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta. Historical evidence is available on Bhaskaravarman, the most famous of the early kings, who ruled Kamarupa in the first half of the seventh century. Banabhatta in his *Harshacharita* and Hieuen Tsang in his account refer to Bhaskaravarman. For a much earlier, legendary period, tradition speaks of King Narakasura, who is said to have come from Mithila to rule over Pragjyotisha. The significance of this early history and tradition for the later social and cultural history of Assam is that the region, in spite of difficulties of communication with the rest of India, was connected with the mainstream of India's cultural life. These contacts, continuing till the thirteenth century A.D., led to the formation of the easternmost branch of Magadha Apabhramsa or the Assamese language.

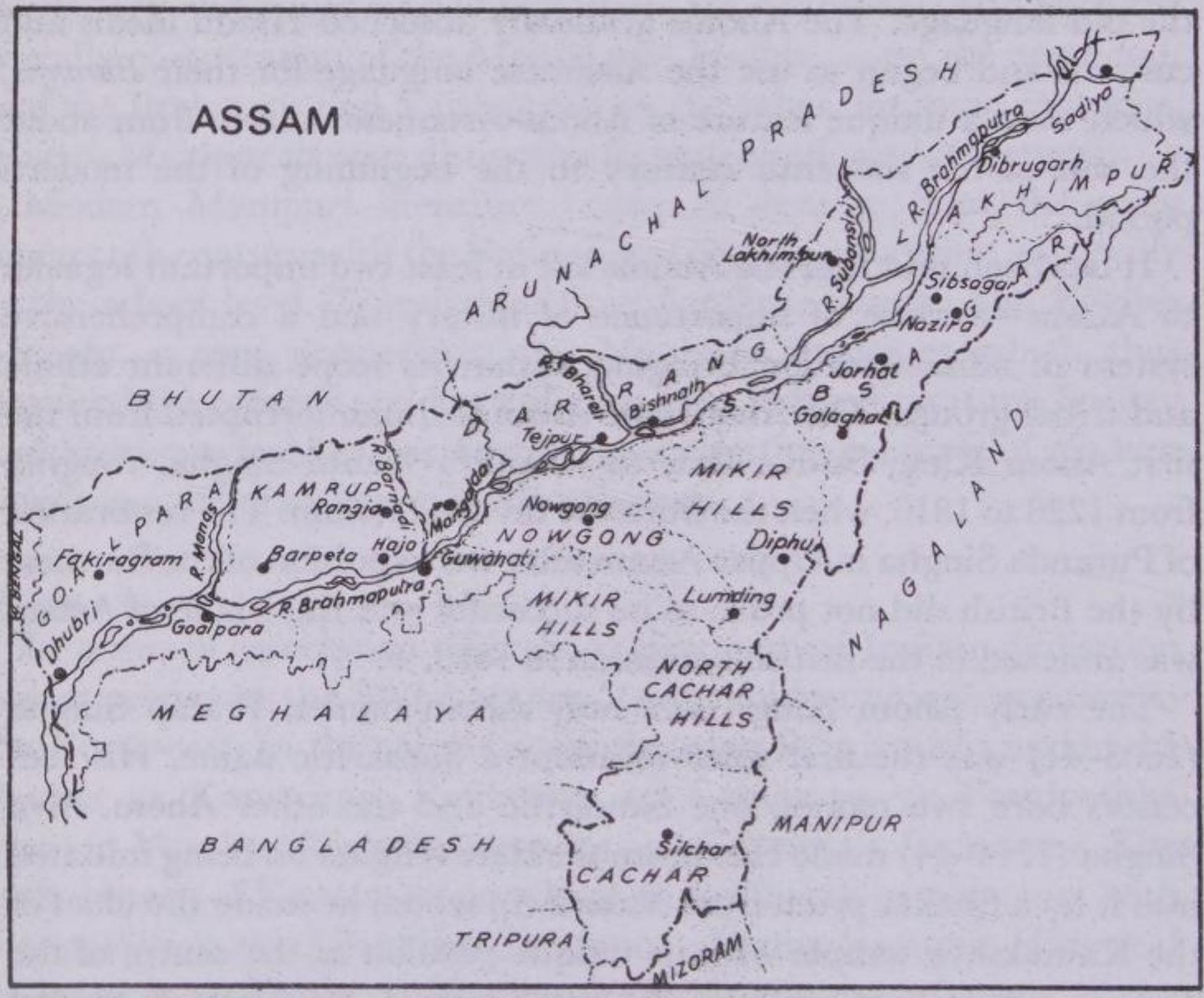
When the Ahoms, a branch of the Shan tribe of Upper Burma, invaded and occupied the easternmost part of Assam in about 1228 A.D., they brought to this area their own language, religion and literature. In the early phase of expansion the Ahoms wrote their *Buranjis* or historical chronicles in Ahom, a language of Chinese–Thai origin. Slowly they started adopting the Assamese language and were bilingual for about three centuries. The priests and astrologers of the Ahoms, like the *Deodhais* and the *Bailungs*, however, continued to use the old language. The Ahoms gradually absorbed Hindu ideals and customs and began to use the Assamese language for their *Buranjis*, which were a unique feature of Ahom–Assamese culture from about the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the modern period.

It has been said that the Ahoms left at least two important legacies to Assam—a sense of importance of history and a comprehensive system of administration bringing within its scope different ethnic and tribal groups. The Ahom rule continued uninterrupted from the first Ahom King, Su-Ka-Pha, to Chandra Kanta Singha, roughly from 1228 to 1816, when the Burmese invaded Assam. The restoration of Puranda Singha in Upper Assam after the expulsion of the Burmese by the British did not prove to be successful and the whole of Assam was annexed to the British dominion in 1839.

The early Ahom Kings bore only Ahom names. Pratap Singha (1603–41) was the first ruler to adopt a Sanskritic name. His successors bore two names, one Sanskritic and the other Ahom. Siva Singha (1714–44) made Hinduism the state religion on being initiated into it by a Shakta priest from Nabadwip whom he made the chief of the Kamakshya temple with its unique position as the centre of the Tantric cult in Eastern India. At another level, Vaishnavism tended to develop under the influence of Sankaradeva, Assam's great saint, religious preacher and organiser, placed, according to tradition, between the mid-fifteenth and the mid-sixteenth century. In Assamese culture the Vaishnava and Shakta traditions are two distinct trends, more so than in Bengal. The lyrical tradition of Mithila in Bihar deeply influenced both Bengal and Assam during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Assam's political and cultural life tended to decline from the late eighteenth century. Disorder prevailed. Factional squabbles within the ruling class, especially between the Burha Gohain (Prime Minister) and the Bar Phukan (Governor), led to the Burmese interven-

tion in 1816. The Burmese ruled over Assam with great harshness till 1824. The early period of British rule, starting from 1826 with the Treaty of Yandaboo by which the British forced the Burmese to retreat from Assam, was a period of uncertainty for the region. The Assamese language receded into the background. Slowly, however, the Assamese became aware of the distinct character of their own language with its racy qualities, closely related to Bengali but retaining the flavour of its own soil.



Anandaram Dhekial Phukan (1829–59) was the pioneer of a new outlook in Assamese society. Called 'Rammohan Roy of Assam', he was a product of the Hindu College of Calcutta, the most advanced centre of liberal ideas in Eastern India. Anandaram Phukan knew Devendranath Tagore, David Hare and Raja Radhakanta Deb. He dreamt of an Assam that would be converted from a forest into a flower garden, the canoes being replaced by ships, cottages by buildings of stone and bricks—an Assam with thousands and thousands of schools, educational institutions, dispensaries and hospitals, where people would not give false evidence for two *tolas* of opium.

Anandaram died young but his idealism continued to inspire the Assamese youth. The rehabilitation of Assamese language and literature started with the publication of the journal *Orunodoi* in 1846, along with the translation of the Bible. Another landmark was the publication of *Jonaki*, a journal started in 1889 by a group of young Assamese in Calcutta where Assamese culture interacted with the urban and metropolitan forces of the city.

The need to retain an identity remains a strong force in Assam as in the rest of North-eastern India. But the persistent migration into Assam by people from outside the region has made the problem particularly complex. In India, however, one culture shades off into another and cultural differences are less vital than the need for economic development.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

THE PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

INDIA became independent on 15 August 1947 after partition. There was the prospect of further fragmentation. British paramountcy lapsed leaving each of 500 Native States free of all treaty obligations. In the holocaust that accompanied partition more than ten million people were herded and driven out of one country to another by the end of 1947. Before India and Pakistan were two months old there was war between India and Pakistan. The Maharaja of Kashmir did not at first join India or Pakistan and made a stand-still agreement. But Kashmir was infiltrated into by tribesmen across the Pakistani border with the support of regular Pakistani forces. Severely pressed by these Pakistani invaders, the Maharaja declared accession to India and consequently India had to make an all-out effort to save Kashmir. She succeeded. Indian troops were airlifted to Kashmir and the valley was cleared by November. But there was heavy fighting beyond the valley throughout the winter. The United Nations imposed a cease-fire and established a cease-fire line. India declared Kashmir's accession as final. Kashmir was given a special status in the Indian constitution, but the special status has now disappeared. Hyderabad also created a problem for new India. There was a clash with the Razakars, a para-military organisation. But the Government of India offered generous terms which the Nizam accepted and Hyderabad acceded to India. But other States were induced to join without any threat of force. This was the work of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and his factotum V. K. Menon. We need not record their manoeuvres. Too much privilege was perhaps granted to the Princes, but this made absorption easy. Ultimately the States were merged with the provinces bringing all parts of the country under one single government. All this happened within two years after independence. The special privileges of the Maharajas were abolished by legislation in November 1971.

Mahatma Gandhi, who had brought a new style and spirit for the nation's fight for the establishment of 'a Sovereign Democratic Republic' and succeeded in establishing it, fell a victim to the prevailing atmosphere of violence and hatred. This murder on 30 January 1948 of the greatest Indian of modern times by Nathuram Godse might

have led to a crisis. Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel succeeded in tidying over the crisis.

The Indian Constituent Assembly first sat in December 1946. The greater part of the constitution came into force on 26 January 1950. This day is referred to in the constitution as 'the Commencement of the Constitution'. The general features of this constitution are that it is written, it is the largest constitution in the world with 395 articles and 8 schedules, it is partly rigid and partly flexible. No provision of the constitution is unalterable. It is a federal structure with unitary features. It is a compromise between judicial supremacy and parliamentary sovereignty. The constitution has adopted the parliamentary form of government from the unwritten constitution of England. It has left full scope for conventions to grow up in order to fill the blanks in the constitution which may become necessary to meet the exigencies as they arise. Parliamentary responsible government with adult suffrage was now firmly established. On 26 January 1950 India was proclaimed a Republic. In the first elections under the new constitution there was an enormous electorate—160,000,000 voters. India remained a member of the Commonwealth.

At the end of 1950 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel died. As Jawaharlal Nehru's co-sharer in power he was responsible for the consolidation of India after Independence and the integration of Princely States. There was now a strong Central Government. Nehru's complete ascendancy was established. The elections of 1951-52 confirmed his hold over the parliament, the party and the country. He was the charismatic leader who knew the public mind. India did not join any of the power blocs and followed a policy of non-alignment. Nehru regarded pacts as a source of international tensions. India was one of the first countries to recognise the Republic of China. The relationship which India desired with other countries was clearly defined in 1954 in a statement of the five principles (*Panch Sheel*) —(1) mutual respect for each other's integrity and sovereignty, (2) non-aggression, (3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefits, and (5) peaceful co-existence. Agreements embodying these five principles were signed by India with Communist China, Russia and some other countries. This was India's reply to pactomania.

After Chinese 'liberation' of Tibet, the *Dalai Lama* was granted asylum in India in 1958. Relations with China became less and less friendly. Border demarcations in Chinese maps showed that a dispute

was building up. A Chinese map in 1959 showed that China claimed 163,850 sq. kilometres (40,000 sq. miles appr.) of what was regarded as Indian territory as part of China. There was at the same time a new trend. Russia openly supported India on Kashmir and Goa. Goa was the last vestige of Portuguese colonial rule in India. It was taken by force in 1961. In spite of occasional agreements, relations between India and Pakistan did not improve. India's resentment against increasing military aid to Pakistan by the U.S.A. and support of India by Russia continued to dominate India's international relations. India's relations with the U.S.A. became embroiled with Pakistan.

Sino-Indian relations rapidly deteriorated. China was pecking and nibbling at India's borders and occupied 31,720 square kilometres (12,000 square miles) of Indian territory. She was not prepared to recognise India's annexation of Kashmir and India's special relationship with Sikkim and Bhutan. Tension developed. China attacked India at both ends of the border, east and west, in October 1962. In Ladakh the Chinese quickly captured about 22,400 kilometres (14,000 miles) of territory, some of it lying even 80 kilometres westward of the road they had already built across Aksai Chin to which they laid a claim. They were checked at Chushul, the highest airfield in the world. But in the east, in NEFA, nothing could stop their progress. Indian soldiers in NEFA were trapped and the Chinese advanced perilously near the Indian oilfield at Digboi. But they suddenly ended their offensive and withdrew to within twenty kilometres behind their actual line of control in 1950. But they retained most of their new gains in Ladakh, though in NEFA they withdrew behind the celebrated MacMohon line, the *de facto* historic line of demarcation of the days of British rule. China's sudden retreat might have been due to the difficulty of maintaining a long supply line which was very much exposed. Nehru perhaps did not believe that the Chinese would take such strong action for border disputes. He did not know that his armed forces were so ill-equipped. But China succeeded in making it clear to the world that she was the strongest Asian power. She discredited India and taught the Tibetans and the Dalai Lama that India was too weak to be of any use to them. The Chinese motive was also perhaps calculated to put a severe strain on Indian economy by adding to her burden of defence with a view to discrediting her 'mixed economy' and her economic planning. Pakistan and China drew closer in their common opposition to India, and the

U.S.A.'s massive military aid to Pakistan cancelled her very valuable economic aid to India.

Nehru died on 27 May 1964. Lal Bahadur Shastri, the least controversial Congress leader, was the choice of the Congress party as his successor. He proved to be one of the ablest Prime Ministers any country has produced. Indo-Pakistani relations were more strained than ever. A clash occurred in the Rann (desert) of Kutch. Pakistanis intruded into Indian territory and claimed about 8,960 square kilometres (3,500 square miles) of the Rann. Pakistan tried to imitate what China did at Aksai Chin. The attack was in brigade strength with American tanks. On the intitative of Harold Wilson, the British Premier, in a Commonwealth Conference, a cease-fire agreement was signed. Pakistan was in the meantime preparing for a war on the Kashmir front. This Kutch affair was a dress rehearsal. She perhaps expected that China would help her by opening another front. India kept six divisions of troops to meet this Chinese confrontation if it should materialise. The Pakistani army began its offensive in Jammu on 1 September 1965, supported by Patton tanks and Sabre jet bombers and threatened to cut off communications between India and Kashmir. Indian army thereupon took the offensive in three sectors advancing as far as the outskirts of Lahore. Lahore and Sialkot sectors became the burial ground of Pakistani armour. 'A sober overall strategy matched by brilliant tactics at the lower levels' achieved remarkable success. The war lasted for 23 days ending on 23 September. China gave an ultimatum on 17 September—'India must immediately destroy posts it had set up in Chinese territory or face counteraction by China.' Shastri's reply was that any threat by China would be met, but if there were any Indian posts in the Chinese territory China was at liberty to destroy them. The threat did not materialise. The ultimatum was withdrawn. It was the most effective thrust in political fencing. While Indian soldiers were advancing towards Lahore a cease-fire came into force at the demand of the Security Council. But relations between India and Pakistan remained very tense and there were repeated local clashes. On the initiative of the Soviet Premier there was a meeting between the Pakistani President Ayub Khan and the Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at Tashkent on 10 January 1966. They agreed not to have recourse to force and to settle their disputes through peaceful means. They agreed to withdraw all armed personnel to 5 August 1965 line. They also

agreed to restore normal functioning of diplomatic relations. Shastri died at Tashkent of a heart attack the same night. The ink of his signature was scarcely dry before death came to Shastri at the height of his achievement.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi succeeded Lal Bahadur Shastri, and soon developed into a confident and assertive leader. A significant event in the early phase of her career as a Prime Minister was the Fourth General Election in 1967. For the first time the Congress lost its majority in half of the States. In 1969 a split occurred in the Congress. The Congress majority in the Parliament was badly affected. Matters were complicated by the adverse decisions of the Supreme Court in the Bank Nationalisation Case (1969) and the Privy Purse Case (1970). It was felt necessary by the ruling Congress to seek a fresh mandate from the electorate. The Fifth General Election in 1971 saw Mrs. Gandhi and her Congress(R), despite opposition from the Congress(O), the Jana Sangh, the Swatantra, back in power in the Lok Sabha with a two-thirds majority.

On 28 March 1971 the formation of the Bangladesh government with Mujibar Rahman as the President was announced. A bloodbath followed in the former East Pakistan, renamed Bangladesh, in which the West Pakistan army went on a rampage. On 4 December Pakistan declared war on India and was defeated in two weeks. An independent Bangladesh came into existence.

On 25 June 1975 a Proclamation of Emergency, under Article 352 of the Indian Constitution, was declared on the ground of 'internal disturbances'. In the Press Note on the Proclamation it was stated that certain persons had been inciting the police and the Armed Forces against the discharge of their duties and their normal functioning. The Emergency was revoked on 21 March 1977, a day after Mrs. Gandhi's defeat in the Sixth General Election. The formation of the Government by the Janata Party, consisting of the Congress(O), the Jana Sangh, the Bharatiya Lok Dal, the S.S.P. and the Congress for Democracy (C.F.D.), followed their victory in the Lok Sabha election. The development of the Janata Party as an alternative to what came to be known as the Congress(I) led by Mrs. Gandhi was interpreted as a healthy sign for Indian democracy. But the Janata Party fell a victim to its own dissensions. The rift between the Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, and the Home Minister, Charan Singh, seriously weakened the party. In the Seventh General Election in 1980 the Congress(I) came to power with a landslide victory. The opposition remained fragmented at the national level.

As the largest democracy of the world, as one of the most industrialised countries in the Third World, as a leader of the non-aligned countries and the spokesman for developing countries, India has an important position and role in international affairs. But a country's strength comes from within; we have to sort out our myriad problems, root out poverty, ensure a basic standard of food, clothing, housing, education, employment to all our countrymen before we can claim to be a truly democratic country and play a more effective role in world affairs. It is up to us to work out the correct path that will lead us to growth and prosperity.

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